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THE NEW

STATESMAN AND NATION

The Week-end Review

Vol. XIX. No. 482 [Incorporating THE ATHENÆUM] SATURDAY, MAY 18, 1940 [Registered at the G.P.O. as a newspaper] SIXPENCE

JUN 4 1940

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THE NEW GOVERNMENT

AT this moment, the most critical in the history of these islands, Britain has formed a new Government. It is fully representative of the three parties. It is a token of a necessary unity. Mr. Churchill has become the symbol of the will to resist. Sir Archibald Sinclair goes to the Air Ministry; his job at the moment is, however, probably less important than that of Mr. Morrison, Mr. Bevin and Lord Beaverbrook, who have the immediate task of doubling the production of aeroplanes as of other war materials. At any other moment in our history the collaboration of Labour with men like Lord Lloyd, who now controls the Colonial Office, and Mr. Duff Cooper, who goes to the Ministry of Information, would have seemed impossible. No one has expressed "war aims" as different from those of Labour as Mr. Duff Cooper; no one did the Allied cause so much harm in the United States at the beginning of the war as Mr. Duff Cooper, who first spoke of the early restoration of the Monarchy in Germany and then declared that we were at war on the whole German people. The comments of the American press on his speeches need to be read to be believed. If the war lasts, these fundamental differences of outlook will be important. But Mr. Churchill may well have argued that all that is now past history; that now that the national danger is apparent the only propaganda that matters concerns the energetic conduct of the war. For that purpose Mr. Duff Cooper, who knows something of journalism and who is known to be a close friend of France and has a genuine appreciation of French culture may do as well as anyone at the head of British propaganda.

Three of the new Labour Party Ministers—Mr. Herbert Morrison, Mr. Dalton, and Mr. Bevin—hold key positions on the economic front. Mr. Morrison has the Herculean task of clearing out the Augean stables of the Ministry of Supply; Dr. Dalton will have to think out a completely new strategy of economic warfare if, as seems probable, the area of conflict is now to be extended to the Mediterranean; and Mr. Bevin will have both to meet increasing demands for men from the chiefs of the armed forces and to face up to the growing discontent over the rising real costs of living. These are large tasks; but they by no means exhaust the tale of what needs to be done, and done quickly, if the situation is to be retrieved. The time has clearly come when, if we are to win the war, we must think and act in terms not merely of supplying military needs, but of mobilising the entire economic resources of the nation. There is no room under the existing conditions for any uncontrolled sector of the national economy, and no sense in relying on the profit motive to get the goods we need produced.

For such a task the existing powers of the Ministry of Supply—or of any other Ministry at present in being—are much too narrow. Apart from personalities, the most unsatisfactory feature of the new Government is that it appears to have taken over the faulty departmental organisation of its predecessor practically without change. There is still no provision for any co-ordinating economic authority, for any planned control over the totality of our economic resources, or for any conscription of capital corresponding to the conscription of men. It is doubtful if any such reorganisation has so far been contemplated; the Labour Ministers in the War Cabinet, with the three economic Ministers outside it to spur them on, ought to make this intensification of the economic effort their special concern. Not content with cleaning up the controls, at present so largely dominated by the big trusts and trade associations, they ought to insist on an extension of disinterested controls to every important industry, including those producing supplies mainly for the civil population.

As for Mr. Bevin, his task is to ensure that the mobilisation of man-power, for both military and economic purposes, is carried out with the minimum loss of workshop freedom and, if large transfers of labour from more to less vulnerable areas become necessary, with the minimum of hardship. He will have also to persuade his colleagues in the Government that the demand for higher wages to meet rising prices cannot be kept in check merely by subsidising the sale of a few basic foodstuffs, if therewith other necessary foods and other ingredients in the cost of living are allowed to rise in price almost without check. If there is to be an "iron ration," it will

have to be a ration on which people can live and not merely exist. It is unfortunate that the departments chiefly concerned with the prices of necessaries—the Food Ministry and the Board of Trade—have not Labour Ministers; but it will be the more indispensable for Mr. Bevin to take up the cudgels with his colleagues in these offices on behalf of the working-class consumers. Finally, it will be for the "shadow" Labour Opposition outside the Government to bring constant pressure to bear at all these points both on the Labour Ministers and on the Government as a whole.

Divided Italy

All the omens suggest not merely that Italy is on the edge of a decision to enter the war as a belligerent, but that the Duce has actually taken it. The most significant symptom is the suspension of the sailings of her liners to Turkish ports. In Egypt the final steps have been taken to meet an invasion from Libya, for the few towns on the margin of the desert have been evacuated. The intellectual preparation for belligerency is not impressive. Uniformed Fascists have plastered Rome with placards that carry gross insults to Great Britain, and the schoolboys enjoyed the indulgence of a holiday to demonstrate for war. Again the old cry, "Savoy, Nice, Corsica" has been heard in the streets. The calling up of further classes has brought the army to a strength of about two million men. The official polemics in the press turn primarily on the supposed severity of the British blockade, though it is notorious that Italian shipping in fact enjoyed more lenient treatment than that of our Dutch and American friends. The real interpretation of these organised demonstrations is, of course, that Italian opinion is profoundly divided, and that the Church and the Monarchy are for peace. The rumour that Hitler has advised the Duce to get rid of the Monarchy may conceivably be true, but the result of such an attempt might well be catastrophic, for the army is in sentiment anti-German and Monarchist. The courage of the Pope in flatly condemning the invasion of Holland and Belgium must have its reflection in the state of mind of Italian Catholics. The moral of all this is clear. If and when Mussolini enters the war, a bold counter-attack by the Allies, if an appeal over his head to the Italian people went with it, might shake the Dictator's power at the first grave reverse.

The Balkan Slavs

Moscow has greeted the Churchill Government in a broadcast so friendly that the question arises whether a modification of Russia's European policy may be expected. Since Stalin achieved his ends in the Baltic, the Balkan Peninsula is now for him the main concern. There the most significant new fact is the tendency of both the Slav States to turn towards the Kremlin. The Bulgars were the first to move. Much more startling was the despatch from Belgrade, which had not yet "recognised" the Soviet Union, first of a commercial and then of a military mission. A trade deal—minerals against agricultural machinery—was soon effected, but this is obviously only a symbol for a political rapprochement. The Slav peasants of these two States have a racy and native idealism of their own. In the early years after the war it found expression in decidedly radical agrarian movements, led in Jugoslavia by the Croat, Raditch, and in Bulgaria by Stambulisky. Both men were murdered by the reactionaries and the peasants were crushed. But they retain their traditional habits of thought. Munich had a profound effect on them. They resented the betrayal of a brother Slav State by the Western Powers. They fell back into a line of thought which had always had its spokesmen among them. The West, they concluded, is decadent—and, indeed, they had never had much use for its refinements. They feared and hated Germany as the historic enemy, but now they turned as of old to Moscow for salvation. They were not shocked when Stalin made his bargain with Hitler and acquired half Poland and the Baltic Provinces. That was the old Russia they had always understood, playing power politics as any Tsar might have played them. It was easy in this context to forget the social aspects of the Soviet system, which may be uncongenial to Balkan *Kulaks*. This revival of Panslavism was all the easier since the immediate threat to Jugoslavia came from Rome, which lost no opportunity of underlining its antagonism to Moscow.

Panslavism Revives

The Soviet Union, on its side, was not slow to welcome this revival of Panslavist sentiment. The local Communists were prompt to exploit it. This was most noticeable in Bohemia, but there have been signs of it in the Balkans also. Bulgaria, in particular, had some years ago a powerful Communist movement, which trained that redoubtable militant, Dimitrov. On the Russian side, the struggle between Trotsky and Stalin can be viewed under this aspect. The men whom Stalin liquidated were most of them Westerners. They had spent years of exile in Switzerland, Paris or the U.S.A. Most of them talked one or several European languages fluently, had a Western outlook on life, thought of the social revolution with the world of Babeuf and the Communards for their parish, and saw in themselves the successors of the Jacobins; Stalin and his immediate lieutenants, Voroshilov and Molotov, were never Westerners, had never lived abroad and spoke no Western language. Their outlook was Eastern and Russian, and behind them stood the key-men from the provinces, the petty bureaucracy of the party. Their first tendency was to isolate themselves from the West. But it has doubtless since occurred to them that Panslavism may be a useful tool. Stalin, however, is not a Slav but a Georgian. To Marxist theory any variant of the doctrine of race is abhorrent, and Panslavism was a mystical and romantic creed that the whole Russian Left regarded as typically reactionary. But with all its mystical decorations, it was the offspring of geography and power-politics. It is the justification for a policy of expansion, and the clue that leads to warm waters and open harbours. To avoid it would have required severe self-restraint, from the moment that the Red Army reached the Carpathians. This tendency, with some others, suggests that Russia may be standing to-day for the *status quo* in the Balkan Peninsula. If Germany and Italy violate it, Russia will doubtless do the same, but hardly as a friendly partner.

China Counter-attacks

The thirty-fourth month of the war in China has opened with the biggest victory for the Chinese troops since the war began. The Chinese counter-offensive began on May 7th along the borders of Honan and Hupeh on the southern skirts of the range of mountains known as the Tungpo. The Japanese threw over 100,000 men into the campaign and lost heavily. By Friday noon the four columns of Japanese troops had been outflanked and outmanoeuvred and their first line of defence was broken. At dawn the next morning the second line was broken, and at this stage the Japanese defeat turned into a rout, and their morale was shown to be the lowest since the beginning of the war. A great number of prisoners were taken; large units of Japanese were wiped out and quantities of tanks, guns and other war material were captured. This battle only 200 miles north-west of Hankow indicates a great improvement in Chinese strategy and generalship. It will have results extending far beyond the battlefield. Impartial reports both from China and Japan confirm the view that Japan is feeling the prolonged strain of the war both in morale and in man power. On recent occasions requests from Generals in the field in China have been met with a refusal in Tokyo to send more men. China's major counter-offensive, for which her military leaders have been planning for the last two years, comes at a time when the Japanese forces have spent their power in China. The events of this week may prove to be the military turning-point of the war.

From Opposition to Full Partnership *(by a Labour correspondent)*

If human beings are slow to adapt themselves to sudden changes of circumstances, political parties are even slower. The Labour Party Conference at Bournemouth this week met under extraordinary difficulties. The stage had been set for a battle on the issue of toleration or the termination of the electoral truce. It was on this that discussion in the constituencies had centred and that mandates had been given to the delegates. They arrived, however, to find that Mr. Chamberlain and the Führer had each in their own way anticipated the debate and compelled the Executive to give Labour's answer before consulting the Party. The Party, which always hates hustle and since 1931 has regarded wholesale opposition as the mark of men of good will, arrived to find its leaders colleagues of Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Duff Cooper and Lord Lloyd. That was not an easy situation even for the best conference manager; it was rendered still more difficult by the fact that many of the politicians most skilled at handling the conference were distracted by the anxieties of Cabinet-making.

All things considered, the most remarkable feature of the Bournemouth Conference was the speed with which both the platform and the floor accepted the new situation. Whereas on Monday most of the delegates were still opposition-minded, by Wednesday they were beginning to think constructively in terms of that full partnership of which the emergency resolution spoke. Such a transformation does not happen automatically even when Hitler provides the conditions for it; it needs real leadership, and four men were chiefly responsible for it: Clem Attlee, Harold Laski, Philip Noel-Baker and Léon Blum. The story of the Conference is really the story of their contributions.

The actual ratification of the Executive's decision was a comparatively easy matter—the bloc vote of the Unions had been assured over the week-end. But more was needed. Labour must not only accept *fait accompli* from its leaders: the rank and file must be prepared to carry it out. Clem Attlee rose to the occasion: he neither ordered nor supplicated the Party, but guided it to an inevitable decision to accept responsibility for the situation created by the debate last week. When the opposition began to state its case, it was clear that the Left which committed suicide last year had as yet suffered no resurrection from the dead. Apart from what Arthur Greenwood called "the twittering sparrows" of Chislehurst and Chelsea there was nothing to listen to. The sub-Bolsheviks of Suburbia did not even take their own opposition too seriously, but 170 constituency delegates mandated before the overthrow of the Government voted against the Executive. A good result but a bad debate.

How much more was needed was shown by the afternoon discussion on peace aims. The Executive missed its chance to reaffim Labour's peace aims, and the speakers from the floor showed little apprehension of the new situation. Neither Mrs. Ayrton Gould, who has every quality except that essential to a chairman, a sense of humour, nor Hugh Dalton, whose mind was clearly set on higher things, could pull it together. That was left to Harold Laski when he moved next morning Labour's home front policy in the best (English) speech of the Conference. He led the delegates gently but firmly to consider how Labour as a partner in the Government could remain true to Socialist principles even in war. His speech introduced the best debate heard at Bournemouth and fully earned him his triumphant re-election to the Executive at the head of the poll.

All the time, however, there was an undercurrent of uneasiness. Pacifism is still there—Mr. Sorensen, an advocate of peace by negotiation, was runner-up for the Executive—and even stronger is the opposition-mindedness of the party workers in the constituencies. They had come to denounce Chamberlain and the electoral truce: they were naturally irritated that Hitler had thwarted their plans. Moreover, though direct Communist influence was small, the feeling that this was not a workers' war was widespread and expressed itself most clearly on Wednesday morning when Léon Blum rose to bring the fraternal greetings of the French Socialist Party.

That was a memorable scene. As Blum entered there was a good deal of booing, particularly from the gallery; and the floor was luke-warm in its polite applause in marked contrast to its reception a few minutes before of Ben Tillett. Blum began quietly but ended by making one of the greatest speeches I have ever heard. He actually succeeded in carrying with him a conference which did not understand what he said, and when Philip Noel-Baker had given his masterly translation they both received an ovation. At the beginning Blum was almost a defendant before a jury; at the end he was the accuser, and the defendants, the Communist sympathisers, hardly dared to speak above a whisper. The skeleton had fallen out of the Communist cupboard and crumbled to pieces. After this the debate on Finland petered out and there was little heart in the defence put up for D. N. Pritt, who was—mistakenly I think—refused permission to speak. Noel-Baker was given the difficult job of stating the Executive's reasons for expelling him. With his eyes fixed on the gallery, where Pritt was sitting, he patiently expounded an overwhelming case. There was a dramatic moment when he challenged Pritt to deny that from November 30th, when the Finnish War broke out, until the publication of his book he had not attended the Executives of either the Party or the Parliamentary Party or consulted them. Pritt rose: "And they did not consult me," he said. There was a roar of laughter and Pritt went scarlet as he sat down to hear Noel-Baker say that he had covered with "a slime of international law" a brutal act of aggression.

By Wednesday afternoon the Party was more united than it has ever been before. The Communists and their sympathisers had once more played into the hands of the Executive. The real opposition is now not the militant Left, but the Pacifist peace-by-negotiation group, which, however irrationally, expresses an ineradicable feeling in the rank and file. If things go badly in the war I predict a split like that between the majority Socialists and the independent Socialist Party in Germany in 1917. In the circumstances a really useful Conference.

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SURVIVAL

DESTINY has come to this island with the speed of a bomber diving from the clouds. The British people are fighting for survival. For the first time in our history Mr. Churchill made that word the keynote of his address to the Commons as the nation's captain in this struggle. No one was astonished. If there were slow minds that failed to grasp the meaning of our defeat in Norway, they understood what faced us when the German armies swept across the Dutch and Belgian frontiers. Hitler defined his positive purpose in this war in the remarkable proclamation that heralded this invasion: he is fighting for "the consolidation of Europe" against the two Powers which he accuses of opposing this ideal. He may have forgotten that Henri IV was the first to plan it, and that Napoleon nearly achieved it. There is this to be said for Napoleon: that he recognised the human equality of the peoples whom he forcibly liberated from feudalism. A Nazi "consolidation" of Europe would mean the subjection of many helot races to one Master-race.

The proclamation of this war-aim warns us of the fate that awaits us, if our defences should collapse. Hitler cannot consolidate Europe under his own sway, unless he can break our will and shatter the military and economic power of the French and ourselves. There can be no compromises or half-measures in such a war. We have to face the possibility of invasion and of a struggle to retain our national existence. Defeat would mean not merely the dissolution of national power; it would mean the utter destruction of our liberties. The restored Holy Roman Empire could not tolerate a free island on its fringes. If we were allowed to retain any measure of nominal independence it would be at the price of assimilating our intellectual and political life to the totalitarian pattern. What is at stake, then, is something incomparably more precious than any imperial power. We are fighting to conserve our values and our traditions, our freedom of thought and our standards of humanity. Ideas are neither immortal nor indestructible. They can live only in the institutions that incarnate them. Freedom must mould the laws as well as the mind of a society, if it is to survive on this earth.

The will of this nation is that our civilisation shall survive. It gave us last week what we ought to have had many months ago, a truly national government. When the unmistakable crisis of destiny faced us, we all realised that as a fighting leader Mr. Churchill is the best man available. Five years ago he grasped the meaning of air-power and gave the warning that Mr. Baldwin heeded as little as his disastrous successors. He combated the follies of appeasement and understood the necessity of bringing Russia into our coalition. To his capacity for leadership falls the task of improvising amid the struggle the means of defence that his foresight would have given us betimes. We are quit, under him, of the complacency that kept our efforts at half-pressure, for we have faced the fact that the supreme ordeal is actually upon us. We must hold the enemy this summer in the field, or go under.

It is a grim undertaking. After five days of confused and unequal struggle, the Dutch army has laid down its arms. In the air-ports and harbours of the Netherlands German planes and submarines have now their bases. We await with anxious hope the issue of the battle that now rages over the whole width of Belgium. The forces of three nations face the enemy here, but it is clear that he is flinging against them an incredible mass of men and machines. He has set in motion at high speed yet another army on his left, which has crossed the difficult country of the Ardennes to hurl itself on the French lines at Sedan. We do not assume that we can measure even yet the whole scope of the German effort to subjugate Europe in a single campaign. The probability is that Hitler will exploit his superiority in man-power and machinery to attack at many points at once. It is possible that yet another thrust may be attempted across Switzerland in conjunction with an Italian attack, if and when Mussolini decides to act. That brilliant second, clad in shining blackmail, blusters on the verge of a decision. The probability is that we shall be at grips with the Italians from Gibraltar to the Libyan desert before the month is out. Can we, in that event, rely on the neutrality of Spain, exhausted though she be by a ruinous civil war? Sooner or later, if fortune frowns on us, she too may place her strategical key positions at the disposal of the Axis. Finally, it is unlikely, if Italy should attack Jugoslavia, that Rumania can escape partition between Germany and Russia. It has long been our view that nothing could prevent Hitler and Stalin from settling the neglected problems of Eastern Europe by conquest or absorption. Napoleon had the same idea—forcibly to occupy Europe under

one rule. He too came near success. He too sought to include this island in his conquest. The results of French domination would have been infinitely less terrible for the human race than Hitler's success would be. Our ancestors faced their peril and survived.

We know our peril now, but we also know our strength. Our Fleet meets from the air a new danger, which as yet we cannot certainly measure. We are no longer an island; therefore we can no longer rely on muddling through. The fleet remains, however, a highly competent defence with a powerful air arm working with it. Man for man, gun for gun and staff for staff, we believe that the French land army is still the first in Europe. The air-forces of the Allies are, we know, heavily outnumbered, but there is some reason to accept the view that our fighter planes and pilots are superior to Germany's. On two factors our fate now depends—in France on the strength of the Maginot Line, in England on our ability this summer to make good our numerical inferiority in the air. That problem of industrial organisation has been immensely eased by Labour's entry into the Government. The choice of Mr. Bevin and Mr. Herbert Morrison to organise man-power and supply should transform the whole attitude of the workers. They serve now under their own leaders, and they too understand that on the work of our engineers, under their own shop-stewards, depends the survival of a working-class free to combine and act for itself. The more sharply we realise that we have got till August or September and no longer to make good our numerical deficiency in the air, the more confidently may we look forward to our future as free men.

Inevitably our attention is now riveted on the visible battle in the air, on the seas, and in the workshops. But our fortunes can still be influenced, even at this late hour, by political sagacity. Under Mr. Churchill our chances of winning the maximum of American support are appreciably better. Americans will not measure their help solely by our peril: our imperial record also influences them. We have before us, as we write, some of them painfully frank, editorial comments on our failure to reconcile India. It is a gain that we now have at the India Office a man of Mr. Amery's intelligence and courage. He has a simple choice before him. Will he try to coerce the Indian nation, or will he frankly help it to build its own future under its own leaders? The choice must be made in a few days, and over the heads of duller men he must dare to make it.

The most delicate of all our problems of policy is centred in Moscow. About Russia's attitude we dare not write with any degree of assurance. It is arguable that the attitude of the Communist Parties in the Allied countries and in Germany reflects that of the Kremlin. More clearly than in the earlier phases of the war, they are now adopting, though with some verbal reservations, a position that is in effect pro-Nazi. But Kremlin and Comintern do not always time their manoeuvres in step. There is much else to suggest that Stalin's attitude to his quasi-ally is one of extreme suspicion and detachment. Doubtless he was glad to see the Western "imperialists" weakened. But can he desire a total victory for Germany? The time may have come when he would be willing to check Hitler's success. Mr. Churchill may well be able to do in Moscow what Mr. Chamberlain neither could nor would have accomplished. But the approach must be made frankly, in the grand manner, and with some regard for the *amour propre* of a Great Power.

For the main purpose unity is now obligatory. Our criticisms of others and of ourselves; our fundamental differences of aim and philosophy—these remain. But for the moment they are irrelevant; united, we have taken our resolution to survive. At stake is all we value in civilisation to-day and all we hope for to-morrow.

THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

(By an American Correspondent.)

FROM the first early enthusiasm—when Americans expected a revolution in Germany by Christmas—the spirits of millions in this country have sunk to somewhere near zero. Hitler may not prove "unbeatable," as the Nazi propaganda blast asserts, but Wall Street and Washington visualise the war spreading until the whole world that matters is involved, with peace the signal for a period of economic and financial chaos as highly geared war industries are demobilised, and the peoples grope their way uncertainly back to normalcy. Worse, the idea slowly takes root that the United States lives on the same planet as the Gestapo and those gentle and tolerant statesmen, Herr Hitler and Dr. Goebbels.

Whether the fears of these newly graduated prophets of doom prove correct or not, two facts are now crystal clear to the most myoptic Senator. The first is that the United States having taken its stand on the Monroe Doctrine—and decided that political "document" enshrines a vital American interest—may one day have to fight to preserve the Western Hemisphere from attack. The second is that the fortunate geographical isolation of this sub-Continent is passing, and will soon be extinct.

It was the sudden realisation that Hitler, by the occupation of Denmark, had acquired at least a technical claim to authority over Greenland that caused Americans to take the Monroe Doctrine off the shelf, and give it another workout in circumstances far more forbidding than anything contemplated by President Monroe. Greenland lies well within the Western Hemisphere. Its empty shores are within easy bombing range of New York. No one here was surprised, therefore, when the State Department let it be known that "the Monroe Doctrine would be invoked with regard to Greenland should this eventuality become necessary." Hints that Holland might be the next victim of Hitler's apparently incurable habit of cashing cheques at anybody's bank but his own, aroused visions of another war orphan—this time the Dutch West Indies, lying within the vital Panama Canal defence zone—being left in need of protection, press messages that Germans had tried to tamper with coastal lights in Patagonia in order to wreck Allied shipping rounding the Horn, and reports of renewed Nazi interest in lightly fortified Brazil, served to strengthen the conviction that the international typhoon might yet veer towards the shores of the Americas. A prediction by a famous Harvard professor that a German blitzkreig against South America might be expected "within six months of the war ending in Europe," added to the uneasiness of many Americans, and brought a large section of the public to earth with a bump clearly heard in the White House.

Just to dot the i's, Westbrook Pegler, ace columnist of the Scripps-Howard chain of newspapers, wrote a powerful piece in the *New York World-Telegram*, declaring:

> There is no excuse for pretending to think, so as to evade a terrible decision, that the Nazis exclude the United States from their plan to conquer or dominate the peoples of the world and use them as robots to produce the means of supporting the Chosen People on the higher level to which they are told their race entitles them. The Americans are frankly regarded as mongrels and vermin. They offend the sight and finer sensibilities of the Chosen People. To say that a hundred million patriots will spring to arms to defeat them is to beg the question, because Hitler will not attack with arms until he has first disrupted and corrupted the victim. Why can it be hoped that a race which regard themselves as the Chosen People will neglect to draw upon a land as rich as the United States for that higher living standard to which, by race, they feel themselves entitled?

The rout of American complacency, begun by events on the political front, was completed when the real meaning of certain developments in the military sphere sank into the public consciousness.

First it was announced that the War Department had placed a contract for fifty "flying fortresses" having a range, loaded, of 3,000 miles. Hard on the heels of this item came news that the first of a new-type bomber, weighing 72 tons, would be delivered to the U.S. Army this year. This new warplane will be capable of carrying 28 tons of bombs non-stop from New York's municipal airport to Europe and back.

What Wall Street slumps, bank crashes and Dr. Goebbels have never been able to accomplish that little news-item achieved. It convinced quite a few Americans that both they, their families, and the 70 per cent. of the whole world's gold supply buried in the Kentucky hills are in the same world as Göring's air armada. The popular parlour game in the United States now is attempting to guess, if this country can build a bomber capable of reaching Europe from an American base, on what date the Germans will return the compliment. No prize is offered for the answer. (The prospect upset one American aviation expert so thoroughly that he committed himself, in print, to the statement that Germany would build 72,000 warplanes in 1940!)

Clearly the war is likely to spread. Clearly the Atlantic sea-frontier of the Americas is safe to-day only because the British Navy holds the seas, and Germany's long-range bombers are busy in Europe. Clearly, if anything happened to the Allies—as the termites of the Nazi propaganda machine constantly predict is about to occur—the United States might well find itself on the spot. Equally clearly, while isolationism as a frame of mind still flourishes, isolation as a geographical fact is already on the skids. That same aircraft industry that produces the transatlantic Clippers has served notice on whom it may concern that the two hemispheres are now neighbours. Americans, whose thought-processes are apt to be as colourful as their journalism, have begun reading the war news with greater attention. If the Führer may be landing troops at West 14th Street any day to start a

Blitzkreig against "the pro-Jew Rosenfeld" (*vide* the German-American Bund) then this war has ceased to be a mere tussle between the "Old Thieves and the New Thieves," and is getting serious!

All of which helped to deepen a certain pessimistic streak already noticeable in the American press, which if not quite accepting the favourite thesis of the pro-Nazis that Hitler would prove "unbeatable," had reached the point where it openly feared either a stalemate or, worse, a gang-up of all the totalitarians—Germany, Italy, Russia and Japan—which would confront the United States with the dread "either-or" of jumping in up to the neck, or standing aside while the British Empire faced its greatest peril unaided.

Lurid articles began to appear in the U.S. newspapers expounding the gospel of "fight only in defence of your own frontiers." Dr. Harry Elmer Barnes, a respected and erudite pessimist of Catholic tastes, who apparently dislikes Hitler and Chamberlain in mathematically exact proportions—was especially cheerful about prospects. According to Dr. Barnes, whose words are read by millions of Americans daily, the world was out on a limb anyway. In an article in the *New York World-Telegram* (April 19th) Dr. Barnes wrote:

> Europe certainly will be reduced to a shambles and a desert if the war is fought out to the bitter end by military, air and naval battles; it will be like parts of Spain to-day or the old battlefield areas of France. If the war is won by a long economic siege it will mean the end of the capitalistic system of economics and of democratic politics in the States of the victors and vanquished alike. England's "money lords" and the financial moguls of France will be dislodged from control far more quickly and more certainly than they ever would have been by any plot engineered by the Comintern and the world revolution.
>
> There would be some devastation of Asia and Africa. Japan would be laid waste, as well as the coast towns of China. Somewhere between 100,000 and 1,000,000 American boys would be fed to the Pacific sharks or rot under the glare of the Oriental sun. It would be very unlikely that civilisation could ever be restored in the Old World by any social, economic or political system now extant in western Europe.

"If anyone thinks," Dr. Barnes summed up, "that it would be worth all this to bail out the British and French empires, well and good, but let them realise what such an adventure would involve. We should understand it would be no pleasant little lark."

Raymond Clapper, one of New York's most popular columnists, was one of many journalists who plumped for the Monroe Doctrine, the whole Monroe Doctrine, and nothing but the Monroe Doctrine:

> "We have the Western Hemisphere to safeguard," declared Clapper. "That is our first essential. It must be safeguarded in both a military and an economic way. That will cost money and require much attention and delicate work. It is a task whch should not be interfered with by the complications which our participation in a European War would create. Strong hemisphere defence means that no European power can hope to gain a new foothold on this side of the Atlantic. We have to fear, not military invasion, but economic and political invasion of the Americas.
>
> "We have opened our sources of military supplies to the Allies. If that is not enough and the situation can be saved only by our going over with military force, then the whole structure is shown to be inherently weak. Instead of trying to prop it up, we should be all the more concerned to construct our military and economic defences in the Western Hemisphere, where the foundations are inherently strong."

It leaked out that the United States railways, in conjunction with the Army authorities, have completed plans whereby large bodies of troops can be concentrated in New York City and shipped from that port "in the event of an American expeditionary force being sent abroad." ("Military experts"—perhaps remembering the panic created by Orson Welles' famous radio broadcast on the invasion of Martians—"announced there is no cause for alarm" stated the *New York Times*.)

The U.S. Navy hurriedly scrapped a demand already tabled in Congress for a 10 per cent. increase in America's sea-power, and substituted a demand for a new construction programme designed to add 400,000 tons to the Navy, representing a 25 per cent. increase. Cost, £300,000,000 this year.

American liberals were visibly troubled, but stuck to their thesis that North America—geographically remote from Sylt or not—is impregnable, and that the United States should stay out. Even, in the views of some, out of South America. "The time to fight is when the first enemy soldier crosses our frontier—until then our job as Americans is to keep liberty alive in one corner of this planet" sums up the opinion of almost every American Left-winger not punch-drunk through listening to Roosevelt's speeches. They fear, not without sound reason, a repetition of the heresy-hunts of 1917—and do not want history to repeat itself under the impression that this country is "making democracy safe."

Those responsible for the safety and well-being of the United States wish they could let it go at that. Only a handful of industrialists and another handful of Chauvinists want to "come in." But all alike have an uncomfortable feeling of "a world on skates, without brakes." The policies of Italy, Russia and Japan—not the policies of Roosevelt—will determine whether the struggle can be localised in north-western Europe and decided there, or whether the war will become world-wide. America fears that if, at any stage, Hitler appears at all likely to win, there will be a mad rush of predatory nations to "get in fust," and to stake their claims to a share in the redistribution of the good spots of the earth.

What will the U.S. do if this happens? Your guess is as good as mine; I only throw out the suggestion that war-fever is an infectious disease and it is hard to believe this country would stand on the side-lines and watch the "Ersatz Napoleon" win. The United States is already half-in. She has a bigger stake in an Allied victory than any other neutral. Not a cash stake, as last time, but something more fundamental. The security of that Atlantic frontier. Were the Allies to be beaten, this country would have to arm to the teeth overnight—and stay that way. Fascism—American Fascism—would become a real threat to the liberties enshrined in the Constitution. Many feel that intervention to secure an Allied victory would prove the lesser of two evils.

A LONDON DIARY

Friday

HOLLAND, Belgium and Luxembourg invaded. Most of us expected the attack on Belgium and the Maginot Line to come later. Holland was obviously the next victim in any case. Dutch policy has surely been tragically misguided. No small Power can preserve its independence in these days without the support of a non-predatory Great Power. In the desperate effort to maintain a semblance of neutral independence, Holland has refused all staff conversations with Britain and France. In that case what is the sense of resistance? Surely this makes the worst of both worlds. I doubt if Holland can hold out for a week. Germany's simultaneous attack on Belgium and France can only mean that Hitler feels strong enough to end the war in the field this summer. Clearly he does not agree with Liddell Hart that stalemate is inevitable behind the fortified lines of the Western Front. Hitler is gambling on the moment of maximum superiority in the air. Presumably everything is fixed up with Italy and I expect to find Spain also a threat to France in the South. There are ominous stories of "tourists" in Barcelona.

* * *

The opening of the war on the other side of the North Sea has submerged interest in the Parliamentary and Cabinet changes. At Bournemouth, where the Labour leaders are gathered, I hear that Mr. Attlee has pledged the Labour Party to come into the Government, but not under Mr. Chamberlain. As things stood, they had no alternative. Their chance of hard bargaining about war aims or Socialist finance or an intelligent policy about India, Russia, China, etc., is defeated by the attack on Holland and Belgium. Politically impossible to hold things up now while they make what would look like a Party deal. Attlee and Greenwood return to town almost at once with instructions to support Churchill and do the best they can in the circumstances. It would make things easier if Mr. Chamberlain would go to the Lords, but I feel sure he won't. He is still the leader of the largest party in the House. So Mr. Churchill will have to keep him in the War Cabinet, of which I am sure he is within his limits a very efficient Member, in order to ensure the Government's undisputed position in the House of Commons.

* * *

Saturday

I find the contrast between the memories of the last war that flood my mind to-day and the sunny peace of the sea at Bournemouth quite intolerable, and decide to come back at once to London. Not that that will make the misery any less or diminish the utter sense of failure that our generation that set out to stop war is forced to support another. It is already clear from the news that the Fifth Column in Holland is as big as one expected and that the parachute technique is very highly developed. A load of bombs dropped near Canterbury has brought the war nearer home, though this, I think, must have been a case of a bomber who had to get rid of his load because of engine trouble or something of that sort. Invasion is no longer a mere speculation. Hitler says he is going to give us the Duke of Windsor as a king, and Dr. Robert Ley says we are to become an unknown island in the North Sea. This would not worry me at all if the unknown island would not be an appendage of Germany.

Sunday

Long talk to-day with J. who was terribly knocked about on the Western Front in the last war. He has long been an out-and-out pacifist; I have always shared his view of war, but perhaps because I have a more complicated mind, I could not maintain my pacifism. He sees only one picture and one side. To me this question, like others, is an irregular polygon with kaleidoscopic sides. It is futile to argue. My feelings, like J.'s, would take me also to the street corner to shout for peace at any price. Like thousands of others, I feel trapped. Every effort to build up any organisation to prevent war was defeated by those blind, comfortable, gentlemanly leaders of ours who used to praise Hitler and now declare war on the whole German people. We are reduced to a desperate war for existence by men who call themselves patriots. My imagination, like J.'s, is peopled with ghostly pictures conjured up by a repetition of war in Flanders. But I cannot agree with J. that there is now any way of resisting the Hitler regime except by war. He and his friends talk to me about Pastor Niemöller and the spiritual fight of Christianity in Germany. I reply that it is admirable, but that I cannot wait for Hitler's victory in order to have the satisfaction of being a martyr afterwards! These people make an unreal division between matter and spirit. Ideas do matter and they conquer, but to do so they have to be embodied in institutions and supported by power. The Dutch who are being massacred to-day had three centuries of freedom and more than the usual amount of happiness, culture and prosperity, because they resisted Philip II with incredible bravery and endurance 300 years ago. If they had been wiped out by the Duke of Alva, the ideas which J. and I both care about would have had no more chance of growth than they have had in Spain during these last centuries. When J. asks me what would be the use of "victory," I can only reply that the one valuable victory would be a fraternisation of common people on both sides of the trenches and that that will come if the Nazi machine breaks, but that it cannot happen as long as Hitler sweeps on from one victory to another. That is why I find Communist policy so extraordinary; many of us were prepared for revolution out of this war, but to help Hitler is not the road to Socialist revolution.

* * *

Monday

Enough appointments now to make clear the nature of the new Government. The War Cabinet is a political rather than a War Cabinet; the real power in such circumstances must belong to the Committee of Imperial Defence, that is, to Mr. Churchill, the heads of the Service Departments, the General Staffs and Herbert Morrison, the Minister of Supply. Ernest Bevin is likely to be Minister of Labour and the two, who have been old opponents in the Labour Party, will have to work closely together. One wonders whether any man can produce the necessary change in the structure of British industry in the time available. If Hitler is held this summer, there will be time, but the aeroplanes and guns will be wanted most in the next two months.

* * *

Tuesday

The unity in the House yesterday was a reflection of the growing sense of danger. Maxton's opposition speech expressed feelings about the war that must be common to almost all sane men. But when Lady Astor asked by what methods we could have, as he suggested, "freedom without the young men of Europe being slaughtered," he said that "now you have got us to this particular point, I cannot show you how, but I can tell you what the principles are. . . ." Just so. Another interesting speech was made by Mr. S. O. Davies of Merthyr, who said roundly that Socialist organisation was necessary to win the war. Sir Stafford Cripps asked important questions about Parliament now that the Opposition is in the Government. I prophesy the growth of a small and critical Opposition maintaining the vital principle of checking maladministration and bringing policy into the open by questions. And I should not be surprised—I am only guessing—if Sir Stafford who has now no party and lots of energy and brains, finds himself a kind of unofficial leader of this Opposition.

* * *

Wednesday

Holland has not lasted the week and the Germans are advancing. People are really serious now. The parachute business has woken them up. There is danger now of a hysterical reaction. All over the country men and women are looking out old guns as they did, I suppose, at the time of the Spanish Armada and in Napoleon's day. Mr. Eden's announcement of a new corps to guard against this danger meets with immediate response. People want something to do—possibly the new Government will find the way to canalise this issue intelligently. A strange reflection on our society that after eight months of war there should still be an unemployed army on the dole and another unemployed army of the well-to-do and moderately well-to-do! This is the silly side of maintaining a society of private persons; it is the extreme opposite of Totalitarianism. There is an intermediate Socialist society which is not, I believe, unattainable. The good side of the picture has been the tolerance and decency of this beleaguered Britain, just realising that it is not an island. Aliens in the Eastern Counties have been interned with real reluctance, not because of anti-foreign feeling, but because the example of Fifth Columnists elsewhere makes precautions necessary. The most extreme views are still expressed at street corners: so far the crowd listens and passes by. But I wish some pacifist and Left speakers would stick to their real gospel and not provoke anger by silly talk of Churchill being as bad as Hitler and the Nazis. Already there are some stupidities—the refusal, for instance, to give jobs to C.O.s in certain parts of the country, the prosecution of five men for a poster of a general character that had been up for a couple of years, and so forth. The dangerous people are not the street orators or the pacifists or Communists. The underground Fascists are a more serious menace. In the long view the most dangerous people are that solid phalanx of fatuous Tory M.P.s, who ever since the last war have held on to their comfortable life and their great possessions, fought against every necessary change in the social order, destroyed the chance of an international order, supported Hitler when there was time to stop him without war and then arranged, with the minimum of allies, to fight him when he was strongest. Such people have no imagination; they are blind followers of blind leaders of a great country which only a few years ago could have led the world to a new constructive age. Some of them are furious—you will hardly believe it—because they have lost the jobs which a large proportion of them had in the Chamberlain Government! Even now they do not at all understand what they have done with England. Even now they strut about, trying to run this war like the last war—or the Crimean war. They are angry with people like Amery and Boothby who voted against Mr. Chamberlain. Not cricket to vote against your own side and deprive a man of a comfortable job while the brave boys die in Flanders. . . . We've all of us, Left, Right and Centre, made plenty of mistakes, but we have not all been complacent. Some day I'd like to write a study of the Tory mind which has wasted mankind's opportunity between 1918 and 1940.

* * *

Barriers were put up along a certain section of the coast and military guards mounted. A policeman on duty was stopped at the barrier. "But this is my beat," he explained with some feeling. "Can't help that," the guard replied. After altercations between the officer of the guard and the Chief Constable a compromise was reached. The policeman and a guard would walk side by side, each guarding the other and both guarding the road. CRITIC

THAT GERMANY

A First of May Slogan

Fight and live to combat England's blockade and despotism, then you will secure for yourself the necessary freedom to exist! Fight and live for beauty, health, culture, leisure! England will pay for everything! Fight and live to destroy England and her lying hypocrisy, so that Germany may live! Form your battalions: the Führer commands and we follow! —*Angriff*, May 1st, 1940.

Germany's War Aim

Dr. Ley: We shall be asked: Where will this all end? What is our goal? The Führer himself now shows us the goal. We were a small people, closely confined in a narrow space; we wore blinkers. From youth upwards we did not look each other in the face. To-day this is all over. We are a great nation. We are a people without classes, without ranks, a *Volksgemeinschaft* —one people, one belief, one leader and one will. (Applause). And so we march into the great German future.

There is only one nation—England—beyond the North Sea, that wants to bar our way. There sit capitalists, plutocrats, wealthy aristocrats, men whose only idols are gold and capital, who care for nothing except profit. They begrudge the German people their freedom and their unity and they begrudge you, German youth, your future.—*National Zeitung*, April 30th, 1940.

Italy Through German Eyes

The Italians feel the war drawing nearer to them from month to month. Not that Italian policy has changed, but war itself is gradually approaching the Italian people. The problem has two aspects: the question: "What will the Italians do?" can be countered by the question: "What will the Western Powers do?" In other words, the deciding step can be taken by either side. The need of the Allies to find new battlefields (it is more an

English than a French need) has been the chief reason why so many prominent speakers in the Fascist Chamber have lately expressed their conviction that in time most countries will be drawn into the war, a conviction that has been stressed by significant comments in certain newspapers. How can it be otherwise? The Italians are not only our friends, they have not only agreements by treaty with Germany, by which they stand and will continue to stand, but they also know that their fate is bound up with ours and they face the overwhelming fact that their life interests lie in a sphere in which they will never clash with those of Germany, but will constantly clash with those of the Western Powers.

The Fifth Column in Germany and England

If one boasted at the beginning of the war about British unity and pointed to the Fifth Column in Germany, so to-day one faces the phenomenon of complete Germany unity and looks for the Fifth Column in England. The detailed explanation of the British Home Secretary, Sir John Anderson, in this connection, completely reveals the remarkable reverse in the situation. If it was only a question of a few political charlatans and discontented people opposing the war policy of the British Government, their activity could most probably have been concealed and quietly made harmless. The fact that the Minister gave a long explanation about them and showed them to be a danger seems to indicate something more serious.—*Deutsche Allegemeine Zeitung*, May 5th, 1940.

An Admission

We can claim that from time to time works well worth consideration are being produced by the art industry, but no work has ever been produced by it worthy of the great old artistic tradition of our people. This holds good for all branches of the art industry. Also for the film.—*National Zeitung*, May 3rd, 1940.

"Master Housewife"

An institute has recently been established by the Minister of Education for a two-year course for housewives at technical schools. Such a course ends with an examination and the conferring of the title of "Master Housewife." The teaching naturally embraces the spheres of the housewife, the private individual and the family. But at the same time these arrangements undoubtedly help to give domestic activities the character of a profession which is publicly acknowledged and encouraged. And the capable housewife rules in the home—as a trained and experienced manager (although not officially appointed) responsible for the welfare of a small group, the family. All this signalises changes in the household.—*Frankfürter Zeitung*, May 4th, 1940.

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of the column goes this week to Miss Nancy Walls.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1.

"The adoption of vegetarianism is, in my opinion, a great and essential step in civilisation. It is a means only to the end, and we must not be content to be vegetarians only. The end is the cultivation of the universal feeling of brotherhood, on which it rests, not towards animals only, but towards all men."—Ernest Bell, quoted in the *Vegetarian Messenger*.

Lady Howland is the wife of Lord Howland, elder son of the Marquess of Tavistock and grandson of the Duke of Bedford. Her baby son and heir, who is not yet ten weeks old, had the distinction of being born at the Ritz.—*The Sketch*.

I was very disgusted to find on the front page of Friday's *News Chronicle* the article headed "M.P.s of all Parties Think the Cabinet has Blundered." Such criticism does not display a loyal spirit, and certainly will not help to win the war. Surely we can give our rulers credit for having acted for the best.—Letter in the *News Chronicle*.

SPRINGTIME

As I was coming to town by train after the Whitsuntide week-end, a band of very small urchins marched along the platform of a wayside station and stormed the compartment next to mine. As the train moved off, one infant put his head out of the window and shouted to all the world within hearing, including his friends, "Keep smileen!"; and they all joined uproariously in a song the burden of which, no doubt, was the duty of smiling one's way through life. Then they gave a fine noisy version of "Roll Out the Barrel," which they sang with as much vim as if they had been tipplers from the cradle. They were less successful with "Shenandoah"; but, when they came to "Tipperary," they howled:

Goodbye, Piccadilly!
Farewell, Leicester Square!

with unsurpassable sincerity.

It was a pleasure to see and hear so much happiness. They were poor and they were living in a world at war, but not a cloud was in their sky. When they got out at Waterloo, they hitched their gas-masks round their shoulders, looked at their bunches of tulips and limp bluebells to make sure that they were safe, and peeped into pickle-jars filled with water and grass to see whether their captive sticklebacks had survived the journey. I could not help feeling that, whatever I may have written in the past to the contrary, there is something to be said for picking bluebells. How else can a town child bring the country home with him? He is, as it were, taking back the evidence of what his eyes have seen to his parents. It is true that the bluebells in a wood look strangely unlike the bluebells that have made a train journey to London—that bluebells, like some wines, do not travel, and are mere drowned rats of flowers by the time they reach the cities. Childhood, however, is an age of optimism, and the plucked bluebell is a symbol of its faith.

Whether the stickleback survives in the city air much longer than the bluebell I do not know. I have had friends who fished for sticklebacks, but I myself have never done so; and I have never heard of anyone's keeping sticklebacks month after month, as goldfish are kept, in their glass prisons. I suspect that, even if sticklebacks were capable of surviving in such circumstances, their young proprietors would, merely through getting tired of them, leave them to die. Enthusiasm wanes easily—at least, it shifts from object to object—in childhood. The small boy, full of imaginative excitement, may imprison a bee in a bottle provendered with clover flowers, and may look forward to watching the bee from day to day till, having made good use of its time and the clover, it has produced honey. But, as the bee does nothing more than buzz desperately round the inside of the bottle, it is likely that his interest will before long have slackened to a point at which he feels no resentment when an elder, discovering him with his capture, counsels the release of the suffering insect.

In the same way, I suspect, most of those sticklebacks that were brought as treasures to Waterloo Station, have by now been neglected for newer distractions.

Fortunately, the talent for being distracted does not perish altogether with childhood. If it did, we should often find life unendurable. If our imaginations were filled from waking to sleeping with a sense of the evil in the world, we should scarcely be able to work or to eat our meals. Our very meals, fortunately, are a distraction. There are few days in our lives on which we do not notice whether a steak is tough or tender, and on which we are not the happier if it is tender.

Immediate trifles distract our attention from less immediate horrors, even in wartime. I noticed during the week-end, that everyone looked happier who passed a pond on which two small fleets of goslings were sailing in their mothers' wake. We do not consciously say to ourselves that life is good when we watch goslings and ducklings enjoying the first weeks of their lives; but it certainly seems for the moment to be good. We become happier even if a ladybird comes in through the bathroom window and alights on a towel. I do not think it would be fair to call this happiness escapist. It is a refreshment of the imagination by which we are reminded of a living world that has survived ten thousand wars.

I confess I felt this happiness on Monday morning when I stood on a country railway platform and listened to a nightingale singing from a neighbouring bush. Having been born in a country in which there are no nightingales, I still think of it as a bird of wonder and feel that something good has been added to life when I hear it. Experts differ as to the beauty of its song, but, be it beautiful or not, the idea of a nightingale's song is enough for me. It is the idea plus the music, I fancy, that enchants us as we are enchanted by the song of no other bird. I listened to it during the week-end beside a pond in the stillness of which the young moon and Venus were reflected far down. Even the angles, bisected and trisected, made by the searchlights in the sky brought no sense of menace into the starry scene.

Even the cuckoo, who makes no better music than can be produced by a toy, distracts us into momentary happiness from tragic thoughts. "It's a bad bird," said a countryman to me the other day; "I never heard any good of it; but, when you hear it, somehow you feel that summer is coming and you can't help feeling more cheerful." I met a man the other day who was more cheerful because he heard that there had been a hobby in the garden of a house he had visited. Trifles of this kind contribute largely to our happiness and unhappiness. A woman whom I know was made miserable the other day because a chaffinch's nest in her hedge had been stolen—probably, by some nature-loving boy. I did not urge her to maintain a sense of proportion in this disastrous world. It is possible that our interest in little things in itself helps us to maintain a sense of proportion.

This year the world is unquestionably a world to distract us by the detail of its loveliness. Never did a lovelier spring rise from the grave of winter. There are things that we miss. The thrushes seem to have perished in thousands in the hard frost; the wagtails, too, seem to have disappeared: and few of the wallflowers have come up in the garden. But the bluebells in the woods excel even last year's lavish bluebells, and the young leaves of the oaks look more like flowers than leaves in the morning sun. Everywhere the forget-me-not is brimming over—a flower that seems to improve with the years. With apple, lilac, laburnum, chestnut and hawthorn all in bloom at the same time, it would be difficult for an ordinary man to avoid an occasional rise of his spirits. This world of sight and sound, we feel, will be here a hundred years hence, a thousand years hence—perhaps, unless the ice age that we merit returns, a million years hence. Apart from the cultivated plants, it is all—so it seems to us—as old as Eden. The goldfinches that are now nesting in English oaks and pear-trees had their replicas in Noah's Ark. Birds do not progress because they were created perfect. It is said that we, too, were created perfect, but that in a moment of weak judgment we exchanged perfection for the pains of progress, which we have been enduring ever since.

Not that I wish to sentimentalise nature. An excellent poet has told us that she is red in tooth and claw; and, no doubt, her world is not always the innocent playground that it appears. The great virtue of nature, however, is that—especially in spring in England—she does not look red in tooth and claw. She hides her cruelties more successfully than human nature hides hers.

Even so, nature emptied of human nature would to most of us seem no better than a desert. The young of the human species at play are an even pleasanter spectacle than lambs or goslings. They, too, by their presence make the world seem a better place. They live outside the reach of the rumours of war, and are as gay as the butterflies they are taught not to chase. How splendid is their indifference to events! Turn on the wireless at a crisis in the world's history, and they will go on unconcernedly sorting their bricks on the floor, blessedly ignorant of the fact that at that very moment their fate is being settled for good or ill. Providence was never more beneficent than in bestowing on children and animals the gift of ignorance.

Not that everyone of maturer years is envious of this ignorance or would accept it in exchange for the bitter fruit of knowledge. I heard a sensitive woman saying the other day, with a shade of enthusiasm, "We're certainly living in the most interesting period in history"; and there are other people who are manifestly glad to have been born in one of the heroic ages of the world. I myself prefer the tamer eras, when boys could go out fishing for sticklebacks without having to wear gas-masks and the voice of the Nazi did not attempt to drown the voice of the nightingale. Y. Y.

HYDROPONICS

HYDROPONICS, alias Aquiculture, alias Tank Farming, alias Tray Gardening, alias Soilless Cultivation, has gate-crashed into our language.

It has even elbowed its way past the Sergeant-at-Arms and forced itself into Hansard. The Minister for Agriculture was asked whether he was aware of the success of hydroponic experiments by Pan-American Airways on Wake Island. Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith replied cautiously that he was aware of the experimental work being done in the United States and here but the results were not sufficiently definite to justify a recommendation to horticulturists to abandon the soil.

The idea of "Splashing for Victory" is attractive. If we had water gardens on the window-sills, the warning "Gardeyloo," with which the Edinburgh housewives used to preface the shower of slops from the windows might again enliven our cities. The Hanging Gardens of Maida Vale, with blocks of flats turned into vertical market-gardens, would be a thing of beauty and a joy for the Duration. Plying a bicycle pump to aerate the "allotment" is at least less backbreaking than spadework; and buying fertilisers made up like Seidlitz powders is more dignified than following the dairy van with a bucket and shovel.

America has already put the "Cult" in "Aquiculture" and has turned it into a commercial proposition.

Eleven years ago Gericke in the *American Journal of Botany* made his claims for the successful production of crops in shallow tanks of water, to which requisite chemical fertilisers had been added.

Since then Gericke has extended his work and has been followed by others in America. In California, four basins, each providing twenty-five square feet of water surface, yielded 1,224 pounds of ripe tomatoes. The 28 lbs. of chemicals required for this crop cost approximately 4*s*. 2*d*. A basin providing one hundredth of an acre of water surface yielded nearly twenty-five bushels of potatoes. These were grown in the open and the salts cost 6*s*. Cereals were also tried and large yields resulted, but the cost of the chemicals in this case was high.

Naturally, such spectacular results attracted a great deal of attention in America and many people followed-up Gericke's experiments. But when the experiments were repeated in England at Jeallots Hill Research Station, the results were disappointing. It was found that the yield was not as great as those obtained from plants under the ordinary glass-house conditions.

Experimental work by Professor Stoughton at Reading University and others has however shown since, that it is possible to produce tomatoes in a remarkably short period and ensure a better fruit yield.

Recently the Pan-American Air Line has been using the technique on the mile-square Wake Island, in the North Pacific. This forlorn island lies 2,000 miles from Hawaii on the China route. Aquiculture was developed as a possible means of sustenance for the air line outpost. Horticulturalists in America seized on this entertaining and edifying method of roof-top and window-sill gardens—which have become a fad. Experimenters however found that their results were no better than they would get under favourable soil conditions.

When plants are grown in soil they absorb the nourishment from many chemical compounds inherent in the soil, or added to it in the form of fertilisers. Watering of the earth releases the soluble food and feeds it to the plant roots. Hydroponics is a short cut to this.

The technique employed consists of tanks of wood, concrete or iron, coated with asphalt paint and of any length and width. It should however be about 6in. deep. A wire "mattress" of wire mesh, 1in. for the smaller plants, and 2in. for the larger ones, again coated with asphalt is stretched about 3in. above the water, so that the air can get in. The water, however, needs aeration and it is recommended that a bicycle pump used twice daily will supply the "needful."

On top of the wire mesh is spread a litter of straw, of sphagnum moss, or coke breeze. The thickness of the litter depends on what is going to be grown on it. If seeds are to be sown, a depth of 2in. is desirable, but where cuttings, seedlings or bulbs are used, 3in. to 4in. depth affords a proper bedding.

Plants are first set out or the seeds sown. The solution should have water added until it is within an inch of the bed. When the white "water roots" have thrust down, the solution in proper concentration should be maintained about 3in. below the bed. There has been a great deal of dispute as to what is the proper formula for the solution. Some contend that it is necessary to add traces of iron, boron and manganese. The simplest formula for twenty-five gallons of water is ammonium phosphate (mono-basic) ½ oz., potassium-nitrate, 2½ oz., calcium-nitrate, 2½ oz., and 1½ oz. of Epsom-salt. Enthusiastic amateurs, however, quickly find that Tank Farming needs nearly as much care as a new born baby.

Among other things they find that the solution has to be changed about once a fortnight—that they have to analyse the acidity, or alkalinity of the water, with the help of litmus paper and to aerate the water. While soil-born diseases and insects are of course absent, mildew is apt to develop because of humidity, and the plants have to be dusted with sulphur. The solution has to be kept at a constant level. The temperature and the strength of the sunlight have to be carefully watched and often supplemented by electric light.

It has been found, too, that the results vary according to the local water supply.

Commercial manufacturing firms were quick to realise the possibilities of the method, and in America firms prepare the salts and make up the "prescriptions."

Water-culture was not Gericke's discovery. It had been the regular laboratory practice of plant students, physiologists and nutrition experts and the nature of its laboratory uses is a warning of possible advances in wide-spread general use. Its scientific value was in measuring the absorption by plants of "trace elements" such as boron, copper, zinc, etc., the presence of which are necessary in extremely minute quantities to ensure satisfactory plant growth, and nutritional values. These "trace elements" are added by the experimental research workers, who by testing the mixture later can discover whether the plant has "swallowed" them. This is a reminder that Nature demands subtle ingredients. The lesson of the vitamins is warning enough.

Biochemists and physiologists used to concoct synthetic diets, just as "soil" is now being synthesised in water-culture. These diets of

carefully balanced minerals, and of protein fat and carbohydrates were fed to animals, but they found that the animals starved to death. In 1905 the Dutch physiologist Pekelharling fed white mice on a "perfect" synthetic diet and found that they died within four weeks. If, however, they were given milk to drink they were kept in good health.

It was experiments of this kind which led Sir Gowland Hopkins to produce his theory of "accessory food factors" which was later expressed in Funk's word "vitamins."

These were the unknown quantities, whose presence in infinitesimal amounts made all the difference between life and death. Science has revealed the human body to be such a delicately balanced machine, that the absences of one five-millionth of a gramme of a vitamin will appreciably shorten life.

The late Sir Frederick Hobday used to tell me of the extraordinary examples of animal-hunger for the missing "somethings" in their diet. During a famine in Rhodesia, when the cattle died and their bones bleached in the sun, the survivors kept alive by licking the skeletons to obtain phosphates. On a bad patch of the South African veldt, with cattle dying over a wide area around, one group remained miraculously alive. No one knew the reason for the mysterious "wasting sickness" which destroyed part of the herd, nor for the strange survival of the few, until it was discovered that they were eating foliage off a tree into which a slender copper nail had been driven. The trace of copper had kept the animals alive. The instinct which takes animals for hundreds of miles through trackless jungles to salt licks is proverbial.

Conversely, many experts express grave concern about unwanted impurities which may be finding their way into civilised diet. For years wrangling has been going on as to the possible effect of, for instance, aluminium pots and pans and the possible aluminium impurities resulting. Modern canning technique has gone out of its way to reduce even the smallest amount of tin-impurity in food.

These instances are quoted as a *caveat*. We have got to ask ourselves whether water-culture may leave out certain essentials. In a mixed dietary that might not be a serious objection.

In spite of these reservations, water-culture promises exciting possibilities for future development, as our knowledge grows. During the first industrial revolution Malthus held out the grim prospect of the over-abundant population of the world starving to death through an inadequate food supply. He assumed that production of food would always lag behind human fecundity and about the same time Ricardo was advancing the "Law of Diminishing Returns."

Forty-two years ago Sir William Crookes at the British Association predicted that civilised nations would face the risk of famine, because of the wastage of nitrogen in the soil. The discovery of artificial fertilisers, and of "fixed nitrogen," which the German Haber extracted from the atmosphere in time to help Germany through some of the stresses of the blockade, was the answer to that.

Similarly water-culture may enable us to make the desert "flourish like a garden." Plant growth is limited by three main factors, light-energy, mineral salts and water. Production has been limited to those regions where these three are available. In the deserts where the rainfall is scanty the first (the sun), in abundance, is wasted, because the rainfall is scanty, and the sand can hold neither water nor salts. Artificial irrigation of the desert is difficult because the water seeps away, taking with it the minerals.

Tank farming can reduce that and help to harness the desert sun to plant production.

Maybe if man continues to be profligate and prodigal in squandering his legacy of the soil we may be forced eventually into water-culture. Because knowing very little (and we are only beginning to learn more) about the nature of soil, we have mis-used it and created the "Dust Bowls" of the World.

Civilisations have died in the past, not through decadence, but through soil exhaustion, which is another warning we must heed in the New Industrial Revolution.

RITCHIE CALDER

THE TRAGEDY OF EVIL

MR. DONALD WOLFIT (whose acting in *Volpone* at the Westminster Theatre is remembered) has been presenting a series of Elizabethan plays at Cambridge in association with the Cambridge Arts Theatre Trust. On May 13th he and his company performed Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, and that was well worth a journey to see.

It is a play of amazing vitality, with passages of dramatic poetry both vigorous and delicate, notably the love-scene between Giovanni and Annabella, when brother and sister, kneeling before each other, declare their desires; and out of the torture of their forbidden passions win for a moment peace of heart. The incest motive, which has kept this remarkable play on the library shelves for more than three hundred years, is justified dramatically; the object of the dramatist being to raise the favourite Elizabethan theme of the splendour of passion to a pitch beyond defiance of death and make it also out-dare damnation. The enduring reputation of Ford has rested chiefly upon two tragedies, *The Broken Heart* (softer in tone) and this one, the greater of the two; though speaking for myself, I have preferred in performance—not to read—*The Witch of Edmonton* which he wrote with Dekker. That play has also the honour of being the first protest on the stage against the brutalities of superstition. *'Tis Pity* riveted me at the Cambridge Arts Theatre, but it is too barbaric to move me profoundly. The Elizabethan recipe for tragedy, blood, revenge and sin, misses its mark with me. Even if such plays are lit with ravishing gleams of poetry, I remain strangely calm during those climaxes of awful horror; and as far as I have observed others in a theatre so do they. Many would be grateful in such scenes for the splashing of a little bullock's blood to help them to feel, at any rate, something—even anything so little worth feeling as disgust. (I am glad to say that Annabella's heart upon the point of Giovanni's dagger glistened wet and real enough.) The Elizabethans were unmitigated sensation-hunters. It was sometimes a virtue in them (for dramatists afraid of strong effects achieve little), but more often it was a weakness. How naïve they were with all their sophistications! "When the bad bleed, then is the tragedy good," said Cyril Tourneur; but the secret of tragic drama is not quite as simple as that. In this play since practically all the characters are bad (except a holy Friar and an aged father) there is plenty of bleeding. How little horrors are really felt by Elizabethan dramatists is often revealed in the ludicrous inadequacy of the comments they put in the mouth of some character who speaks as a "chorus." Consider the Cardinal's comment at the close of *'Tis Pity*; he speaks "the moral." The stage is strewn with corpses: Giovanni who has cut out Annabella's heart to show it to Soranzo, is stabbed after killing the latter; and Florio, the father of Giovanni and Annabella dies of horror on the spot. Before this we have seen the gaby Bergetto murdered by Grimaldi who mistakes him for his rival, Soranzo; Hippolita poisoned at Soranzo's wedding to Annabella, and Putana, her duenna, dragged off to have her eyes put out and her nose slit. And the Cardinal's comment on all this (he, by the way, has condoned the murder of Bergetto) is:

> We shall have time
> To talk at large of all; but never yet
> Incest and murder have so strangely met.
> Of one so young, so rich in nature's store
> Who could not say, "'Tis pity she's a whore?"

True, that speech is only a conventional substitute for ringing down the curtain, but what a hapless summing up of the inner stress of the tragedy we have watched! Annabella is a woman possessed by a passion for one man, her brother. Call her anything you like, but whore she certainly is not.

Once again we are faced with the puzzle of the Elizabethan imagination—its depth, its superficiality. Lust is a serious passion—and who would deny it poetic overtones? They are present, abundantly present, in this play. Ford had written the story of a fatal and guilty passion, yet he gave it a title and appended to it "a moral" suitable to the story, say, of some amiable, light woman like Manon Lescaut; as though—apart from its having provided thrills and sensations galore—he had had no respect for his subject. Yet this is how at other times he treated it, and this scene was movingly spoken and acted by Mr. Wolfit and Miss Rosalind Iden:

> Be not deceived, my brother;
> This banquet is an harbinger of death
> To you and me; assure yourself it is,
> And be prepared to welcome it.
> *Giovanni:* Well then:
> The schoolmen teach that all this globe of earth
> Shall be consumed to ashes in a minute.
> *Ann.:* So I have read, too.
> *Gio.:* But 'twere somewhat strange
> To see the waters burn; could I believe
> This might be true I could believe as well
> There might be hell or heaven.
> *Ann.:* That's most certain.
> *Gio.:* A dream, a dream! else in this other world
> We should know one another.
> *Ann.:* So we shall.
> *Gio.:* Have you heard so?

Ford is not a close observer of character; the minor figures in the play have little individuality apart from their contribution to the plot.

But in Giovanni and in Annabella, especially in the contrast between their passions, he is penetratingly creative. Giovanni's passion for his sister is like a disease that has fallen on him suddenly in full spiritual health. He struggles against it (and this Mr. Wolfit admirably suggested); but once he feels he can never recover, his reason justifies his passion, and never again for one instant does he doubt that it is the supreme end of life:

> If ever after-times should hear
> Of our fast-knit affection, though perhaps
> The laws of conscience and of civil use
> May justly blame us, yet when they but know
> Our loves, that love will wipe away that rigour
> Which would in other incests be abhorred.
> Give me your hand; how sweetly life doth run
> In these well-coloured veins! how constantly
> These palms do promise health! but I could chide
> With nature for this cunning flattery—
> Kiss me again—forgive me.

This speech, characteristic of Ford's dramatic verse at its best, is delivered just before Giovanni stabs her; and admirably Mr. Wolfit spoke it. Annabella, on the other hand, yields more easily to passion, but less completely. She is alternately possessed by desire and remorse, terror and defiance. The Friar can frighten her into repentance and into marrying Soranzo to conceal that she is with child by her brother. (That holy man never reflects that he is playing a base trick on this young nobleman who adored Annabella); and she is melted to regret when her husband, after a scene of intense ferocity in invective between them, pretends to relent and reproaches her for having deceived him so cruelly. Here, in this contrast between these two passion-driven young creatures, lies the poignancy of a drama otherwise overloaded with melodramatic violence. What a world it is! It was characteristic of the times that when a dramatist wished to make the most lurid use of every form of cruelty and treachery his imagination could devise, he placed the scene in Italy. Ford's Parma rivals Webster's Malfi in merciless depravity. Such a setting also had the popular advantage of showing that where the Scarlet Woman reigned "Justice is fled to Heaven," illustrated here by the Cardinal in the play sheltering the murderer, Grimaldi. Soranzo is brutal and impetuous; Richardetto has but one aim—to kill him because he lay with Hippolita, Richardetto's wife. In instigating Grimaldi, another of Annabella's suitors, to get rid of Soranzo, he is the author of that rich gaby, Bergetto's, murder. Hippolita, out of jealousy, tries to poison Soranzo, but being double-crossed by Vasques, Soranzo's henchman, poisons herself. Vasques is the "motivelessly" malignant villain of the piece—unless we accept his confession as a motive—that he intends to prove that a Spaniard can go one better than an Italian in revenge. He was excellently played by Mr. Reginald Jarman. Such then are the sensational elements in *'Tis Pity*; the genuine tragic feeling lies in the treatment of passion between the illicit lovers; this has depth. The play, with its many changes of scene, was skilfully presented with only one break, so that the contrasts of its short scenes took full effect. The only general defect of the production was a common one. Actors in quick passages of dialogue tend to forget that the audience is not so familiar with the point of particular retorts and words as they are themselves. They often took a scene too rapidly. The manner in which Mr. Wolfit sustained the morbid, frenzied and tender intensities of Giovanni's part was remarkable.

DESMOND MACCARTHY

COUNTRY NOTES

THERE are moments when I dislike, other moments when I like, my countrymen. The moments when I like them are the moments when I most vividly realise how puzzling we must be to the people of other nations. They must smile (one hopes indulgently) at what they regard as our infantilism and sentimentality. For a people reputed practical, a perfidious race, a nation of shopkeepers and all that, we must sometimes appear very odd indeed. Very odd, inexplicable, and rather silly. For myself, I do not find us silly in these moods, but endearing.

I recently met with two perfect examples of this trait in the British race. I set them here on record without further comment. The first incident is about some rabbits which have chosen to make their home under the floor of the living-room in my house. They have made their way in by a ventilating hole left in the bricks. They go in and out, and although I don't mind very much what they do while they are in, I mind very much indeed what they do while they are out. They scratch. They eat. They eat lettuces and clove carnations. Their nuisance value is 100 per cent. They must be abolished, destroyed. The only question is how to set about it.

We try ferrets.

Ferrets fail because the rabbits play a game of catch-as-catch-can between the floor-joists, and so far as the ferret is concerned it turns into a game of catch-as-catch-can't. The rabbit has won. The ferret gets chirruped out of the hole and restored to his sack, a failure at his job. Floor-joists are evidently different from a burry. I confess I do not fully understand how this can be, since I always imagined that joists fitted nicely at either end, so do not see how the rabbit can possibly play hide-and-seek between them, but he must manage to do so in some way as so far we have not succeeded in turning him out.

Ferrets are off the map. Rabbits remain. Lettuces and carnations do not.

I suggest putting a bit of wire-mesh over the hole. The gardener looks at me dubiously. Do I mean the mesh to keep the rabbits out, in which case they will continue to scratch and eat, or to keep them in? I reply rather weakly that I meant it to keep them in. I have not thought out the implications very clearly for myself, but the gardener sees them instantly. "I don't mind killing a thing outright," he says, "but I wouldn't like the idea of leaving it shut in to starve."

Clean. One shoots and kills. One does not imprison a living creature to a slow and anxious death.

Timber

My second incident is about trees. Living in the country as I do, it periodically becomes necessary to sell a few trees in order to supply the hearths with fire-wood for the following winter. In order to do this I make an appointment with the local timber-merchant and walk through the wood with him, marking the trees he desires to throw. He will take the trunk for planks, leaving me the lop and top for cord-wood, which I may then collect and burn. It is a square deal: he gets his planks and I get my firing. I dislike knowing that a tree has got to come down, and I dislike hearing the murderous rasp of the knife which marks and condemns it, but apart from this it is pleasant in the wood and I enjoy the scraps of wood-lore which the timber-master lets fall. He does not find me an altogether satisfactory vendor, but sighs ruefully when I refuse to let the finest oaks go. After some years of association, however, he now knows that it is no use even asking for them. This year in particular, when he can sell all the timber he can buy, my obstinacy must have been galling to him. Yet, setting his business apart, his sympathies are really on my side. Thus he desires more than anything to obtain Scotch fir and tentatively inquired whether I would be prepared to sell. There is only a small group in the wood, but they are fine tall trees, and after the manner of Scotch firs they have set themselves to their best advantage on the crest of a hill. When I declined, he looked really pleased. He had done his duty and was relieved at not having to carry it out. "I thought as much," he said, "and I don't mind telling you that in your place I would say the same."

It may not be the best way to do business, perhaps, but I like him for realising that there are some things beyond business.

V. SACKVILLE-WEST

A TICKET FOR THE READING ROOM

WITH a smile of secret triumph
Seedy old untidy scholar,
Inkstains on his finger-nails,
Cobwebs on his Gladstone collar,

Down at heel and out at elbows
Off he goes on gouty feet
(Where he goes his foxy smell goes),
Off towards Great Russell Street.

Unaware of other people,
Peace and war and politics,
Down the pavement see him totter
Following his *idée fixe*.

Past the rowdy corner café
Full of Cypriots and flies
Where the customers see daggers
Looking from each other's eyes,

Past the sad but so-called Fun Fair
Where a few immortal souls
Occupy their leisure hours
Shooting little balls at holes,

Past the window full of booklets,
Rubber goods and cures for piles,
Past the pub, the natty milk-bar
Crowded with galactophiles,

Through the traffic, down the side-street
Where an unfrocked parson thrives
(" Palmist and Psychologist ")
Cutting short unwanted lives,

Through the shady residential
Square in which a widow runs
A quiet gambling hell, or " bridge club,"
Fleecing other women's sons,

On he shuffles, quietly mumbling
Figures, facts and formulae—
Bats are busy in the belfry,
In the bonnet hums a bee.

At the Reading Room he settles
Pince-nez on his bottle nose,
Reads and scribbles, reads and scribbles,
Till the day draws to a close,

Then returns to oh, what squalor!
Kippers, cake and dark brown tea,
Filthy sheets and filthier blankets,
Sleep disturbed by mouse and flea.

What has the old man been doing?
What's his game? Another book?
He is out to pour contempt on
Esperanto, Vōlapük,

To fake a universal language
Full of deft abbreviation
For the day when all mankind
Join and form one happy nation.

In this the poor old chap resembles
Prosperous idealists
Who talk as if men reached for concord
With their clenched or grasping fists.

WILLIAM PLOMER

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"The Postman Always Rings Twice," at the Embassy Theatre

James Cain's novel has been turned into a French film, with the scenes of the action transferred to France. The American book was one of the toughest of the tough school—a study in sado-masochism which carried conviction by its brisk, off-hand brutality, and lost it again by the customary addition of the sentimental. None of this is really in the French idiom and the producer (Pierre Chenal) would have been wiser, if he was going to use the book, to adapt it more drastically. As it is, the film is not entirely satisfactory. The plot of the novel is so closely followed, there is so much incident, that it never has time to develop its characters and its atmosphere, and, consequently, it lacks from the start the credibility necessary for so violent a theme. All the same it is worth a visit. The café-cum-filling-station round which the action centres is done with that alive, compelling authenticity which the French cinema tradition has perfected. Michel Simon (Nick) gives a quite masterly performance: with his long, knobbly, battered face and his shuffled walk he could be nothing else but a victim. In Marcel Valee's Juge we see all the slyness and volubility of corrupt officialdom. Fernand Gravet and Corinne Luchaire, as the main characters, do not have a fair chance, particularly at the beginning. She is neither sufficiently brutal nor sufficiently lustful, although she improves in the later part of the film. He is laconic and looks well, but the sexual currents on which such a story must move are never clearly enough defined.

"In Good King Charles's Golden Days," at the New Theatre

Mr. Shaw's " history lesson " is not funny, is not even provoking. One expects to find the accepted view of Restoration history turned topsy-turvy—the King a puritan, his brother a great statesman, the Duchess of Cleveland a forerunner of Elizabeth Fry and Florence Nightingale. But no: the characters are very much as we have been accustomed to conceive them. Nell Gwyn is kind and jolly, Fox is passionate and simple, Newton is no less interested in the Book of Daniel than in the laws of gravitation. An interminable dialogue about monarchy between Charles and his brother even reminds us of a fact that Mr. Shaw recently has made us forget—the fact that platitudes can be as tedious as paradoxes. Of drama there is none—not one moment of suspense, hardly even a situation, though the flow of talk is occasionally enlivened by the Cleveland threatening to slap Sweet Nell, or a rough-and-tumble on the floor between the Duke of York and Isaac Newton. What remains? Little except style. Mr. Shaw may have little to say, and to take an unconscionable time saying it, but he does say it very elegantly. Every sentence is shaped, and wings its way with consummate ease across the footlights. Often one is reminded of the dramatists in the period of which he is writing—certainly there is not a dramatist alive with so blazing a talent for writing lucid and expository English dialogue. The actors speak well, and wisely do not try to compensate for the absence of drama by a superfluity of histrionics. Mr. Cecil Trouncer has the best part—Newton, and manages the absurdity better than the grandeur. Mr. Thesiger has too powerful a personality to make a plausible Charles. He fails to suggest gusto; and the melancholy too often is petulance, the wit a sneer. But he is always an intelligent actor. Miss Eileen Beldon, Miss Daphne Head and Miss Isabel Thornton, Mr. Herbert Lomas and Mr. William Hutchinson also deserve praise. But the two happiest performances are by Miss Ina de la Haye as Madam Carwell and Mr. Alec Clunes as Kneller. She is delicious; and when he speaks, the long flicker breaks into a flame. The fancy that Hogarth's admiration for the curve has any bearing in relativity does not seem very interesting, but Mr. Clunes's rendering of the artist's passion is far the most impressive memory that one takes away.

"Garrison Theatre," at the Palladium

Garrison Theatre, which owes its fame to the wireless, is guaranteed to keep your mind firmly on the war. A full-size minesweeper sails on to the stage and shoots down a German bomber with a full-size anti-aircraft gun, a platoon of tin-hatted poilus march and counter-march through a twenty-foot Arc de Triomphe, the chorus dress (and subsequently undress) as Waafs, the programme girls are unseductive in A.T.S. uniform, and real soldiers sit on the stage looking as bored and unembarrassed as Elizabethan nobles. And, of course, there is the inimitable (Mind my bike!) Pte. Warner. Mr. Warner's immense repute is one of the social curiosities of the times. His script, which largely consists of Homeric repetitions of such phrases as " rill mill," " Littel Gel," and other endearing mispronunciations, is extraordinarily poor, and depends for its effect almost entirely upon the loud enunciation of the expected cliché. In the Palladium his personality lamentably fails to get across; and he makes ill worse by his delusion (once very common, but now, one had imagined, quite extinct) that a dinner jacket, a straw hat and a prep-school French accent suffice for a lengthy impersonation of M. Chevalier. The Littel Gel (Miss Joan Winters) is littel better, and her recurrent cry of " Chocolates, Programmes, Cigarettes," is no wittier the tenth time than the first. *Garrison Theatre* attempts to counterfeit the jolly informality of an army concert, but succeeds only in reproducing its amateurishness. There are some good turns—the Seven Martinettis perform some really astonishing acrobatics, and Joe Davis, a world's snooker champion, performs miraculous *tours de force* on a billiard table—but the show as a whole is merely third-rate music hall dressed up in uniform. One would have imagined the public were sick of the war, and would resent seeing stale entertainment posturing in battle-dress. Pte. (Mind my bike!) Warner, however, proves once more that one shouldn't be surprised at anything.

THE COMING WEEK

SUNDAY, May 19th—
W. B. Curry: " The Politics of Democratic Socialism," Conway Hall, 11.

MONDAY, May 20th—
Poetry Recital in aid of Red Cross Fund, Central Hall, 1.15.
John Eppstein: " The Vatican and the War," 12 Gt. Newport Street, 7.45.
" She Would If She Could," by George Etherege, Maddermarket, Norwich.

TUESDAY, May 21st—
Howard League Luncheon. Lt.-Col. F. A. Barker: " Twenty Years of Penal and Prison Reform in India," Comedy Restaurant, 12.45. Tickets 2s. 6d. from 89 Attimore Road, Welwyn Garden City.
China Campaign Ctte. Luncheon. Jack Chen: " Modern Art in Wartime China," Young's Rest., Wardour St., W.1. Tickets 2s. 6d.
Prof. Paul Vaucher: " France at War," Canterbury Hall, W.C.1, 5.
Fabian Women's Group Dinner, Royal Hotel, Upper Woburn Place, 7. Tickets 4s. 6d. from 11 Dartmouth Street, S.W.1.

WEDNESDAY, May 22nd—
Annual Council Meetings of the National Council for Equal Citizenship. Subject: " Women and Wartime Measures." Till May 24th. Particulars from Holborn 9301.
Fabian Lunch. Speaker: Rt. Hon. Herbert Morrison, Royal Hotel. Tickets 2s. 6d. from 11 Dartmouth Street.
Rt. Hon. Lord Snell: " Leadership and Character in a Democracy," Royal Society of Arts, 2.30.
H. Wickham Steed: " Ce dont il s'agit," Institut Francais, 5.30.

FRIDAY, May 24th—
Prof. H. J. Laski: " The Liberal Tradition in the 19th Century," Canterbury Hall, 5.

Correspondence

PROPAGANDA IN ITALY

SIR,—More Italians listen to broadcasts from London than to any other foreign station; and yet the comments of Italians and my own efforts to listen with Italian ears convince me that these broadcasts are singularly ineffective as propaganda.

A broadcaster to Italy must remember two chief characteristics of his Italian listeners:

(1) The Italian is politically minded. Government has never been the business of a class. Priests, civil servants, fascist leaders usually come from the families of peasants or workmen. So the average Italian is interested in Ideas. In the speeches of their Prime Minister, whose knowledge of his people is profound, you will find discussion of political ideas and lessons from history. The "Chronicles of the Regime" cater to the same tastes.

(2) For the last twenty years the Italian people have been thinking in terms of *Realpolitik* and *Machtpolitik*. Though some of them, and especially the Catholic element, may have a sneaking regard for our moral principles, it is only the success of these principles in action that can command respect.

The chief aspects of Anglo-Italian relations which are always in the mind of an Italian and must be borne in mind by a broadcaster, are:

(1) The policy of sanctions which we sponsored was successfully defied by the Italian people, with a show of force to which we had not the courage to reply by force. After much barking we failed to bite. The Italian people conclude that our moral principles are operative only when they cover our material interests.

(2) Despite our talk of freedom and justice the working man in Italy, as in Germany, is better off than his fellow in England. Our principles of political liberty belong to the past. They have ceased to awaken the passions of modern nations which are seeking social and economic justice.

(3) We are merely defending the *status quo*, whereas the Germans are promoting a world revolution. As Italy has been an under-privileged nation in the past (the question of her deserts is irrelevant) a revolution is at least an avenue to hope. The German creed is positive and militant, ours negative and conservative.

(4) In Norway we have lamentably demonstrated both our honourable intentions and the inefficacy of our arms. The campaign has shown that our Navy no longer rules the seas.

In short, our policy in pre-war years and our conduct of the war since September has demonstrated to Italian eyes that we are on the defensive, fighting merely for what we hold, and that even our fighting is half-hearted. The Italians are capable of heroism and like heroics.

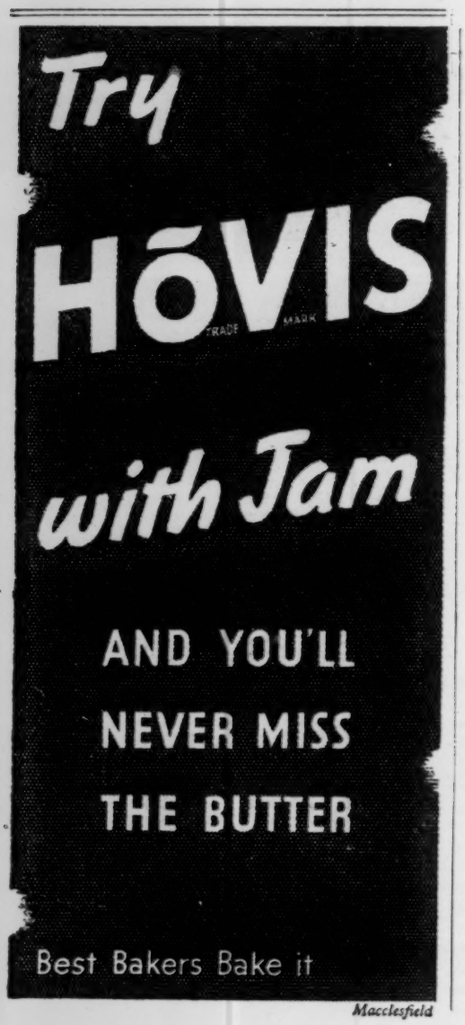
There may be a month or two yet before Italy takes her great decision, and this decision is of vital importance to us. Our influence on Italian policy must depend chiefly on our military and diplomatic action, and from that our broadcasting policy must proceed. If it is to be of effect here it must show that we are fighting for positive ends and are willing to contribute, even at the cost of some material sacrifice, to the making of a better world for all peoples and particularly for the Italians. It must also show that we are able to implement our policies, and that we will win the war, whoever may win the campaigns.

Our broadcasts are usually believed. But the Germans have demonstrated that the presumption of truth is not a necessary basis for good propaganda. The criticism and insinuation of their broadcasts to England are effective even when the listener doubts most of their facts. The Italian also gives us credit for good intentions as far as they go. But if we are merely honest and well-meant we might as well cease broadcasting to Italy, unless we wish to give them a free news service.

My plea is for Italian programmes on a plan psychologically sound, with aims clearly conceived and methods adapted to the soil on which we would sow. Even the statements of our Cabinet Ministers would have to presume a higher level of intelligence (principles are not facts) if they were made to the Italian people.

JAMES PHILIP

130 Via del Triotne,
Rome.



Macclesfield

THE *DAILY WORKER*

SIR,—In your issue of May 4th, Mr. William Rust of the *Daily Worker*, wrote:

> Strachey says that examples of our apologetics for the German Imperialists could be multiplied. He has failed to produce any at all.

In the *Daily Worker* of the day before the German invasion of Holland and Belgium (May 9th) "Our Diplomatic Correspondent" wrote:

> Acute tension and terror prevailed in Holland yesterday. I spoke to several Dutch informants yesterday, none of whom can possibly be described as "pro-German" or "anti-Ally," or anything but in favour of the maintenance of Dutch neutrality and the rescue of Holland from the horrors of war. All of them pointed out that there appears to be no evidence available—certainly none is produced—of any German preparations for the invasion of Holland. Yet these stories are being circulated throughout the world from Allied sources, and the question is: What is the motive? If the stories are untrue, what possible reason can there be for spreading them except that the Allies are trying to prepare the atmosphere for an invasion of Holland by themselves?

JOHN STRACHEY

Ewenbridge Farm,
Shalford, Braintree.

SIR,—We have long been accustomed to the technique of discrediting Socialism by saying that Communist and Nazis are the same thing; but it is new to find your columns becoming the main forum for this kind of stuff, Messrs. Gollancz and Strachey leading the attack, and yourselves summing up in their favour. May I make a few points on the other side?

(1) The *Daily Worker* criticises the British Government's behaviour over the minefields as leading up to and therefore causing the German invasion of Norway. ("Provoking" was Mr. Churchill's word.) Messrs. Strachey and Gollancz think it should not say this because the German press says similar things. This is equivalent to the argument, "Surely you are patriotic enough to admit that the British Empire is the greatest force for good the world has ever seen." Just as patriotism is not the only criterion of truth, so the way to disprove a political analysis is to challenge the facts on which it is based, not to say "that can't be true because it is deleterious to British imperial interests." The *Daily Worker* may be right or wrong (I think it is more right than wrong); but at least it argues a case rationally.

(2) Nor does this case rest only on the mine laying. The *Daily Worker's* attitude to the war in Scandinavia seems to me at any rate to follow logically from its analysis of the Finnish war, that the western imperialisms were looking for a base for attack on the U.S.S.R. The German invasion was a reply not merely to the mine-laying, but also to the force which (Mr. Chamberlain now tells us) was in readiness a month before being used in Norway. These surely are facts with which moral judgment on the relative wrongness of the two sides have nothing to do.

(3) Having made its political analysis, the *Daily Worker* emphasises this to the exclusion of the version of Mr. Churchill and his friends. "Helping Hitler," say Messrs. Strachey and Gollancz and yourselves. This again seems to me Left-Book-Clubism in the worst sense of the word, a purely pragmatic view of truth. The *Daily Worker* thinks it has something important to say, something that no other newspaper says; in consequence, it says that something, says it often, and to the exclusion of the other side's version. Sir Walter Citrine estimates the *Daily Worker* circulation at 70,000 a day; the newspapers giving out the Chamberlain and Churchill version of the Norwegian events must have a circulation of over 10 million. It is surely rather absurd and pedantic to accuse the *Daily Worker* of suppression because it doesn't repeat what all its readers must already have heard *ad nauseam*.

(4) But the real quarrel of the pinks is not with the tactics of the *Daily Worker* but with its line. Each of the letters with which this campaign opened asked a series of rhetorical questions which produce the required answers because formulated to do so. One might retaliate. Are Messrs. Strachey and Gollancz and the pinks generally Socialists or not? Do they think a victory of Chamberlain imperialism (plus Reynaud, Sikorsky, Osusky, the Hapsburgs and all) the likeliest way to produce world Socialism? Do they think the Soviet Union *an ally* of Nazi Germany? If so, do they want to fight the U.S.S.R. in the interests of world Socialism? If not, why do they attack those who believe there is more hope of world Socialism coming via the U.S.S.R. and popular movements all over Europe than from Whitehall? (A point of view not altogether alien, one thought, to those held by Messrs. Strachey and Gollancz a few months ago.)

The whole point of Lenin's analysis of the last war was that the alternatives were not restricted to Kaiser or Czar: it was possible to defeat both. We pinks have, as Mr. Neill rightly points out, to decide whether we want Chamberlain or Socialism, because Chamberlain is not going to give us Socialism, and the economic processes inseparable from this sort of a war are making it increasingly difficult to get Socialism. Messrs. Strachey and Gollancz used, I believe, at one time to criticise the Transport House leadership for putting its Socialism in cold storage: that is for objectively helping capitalism to survive by talking Socialism and doing nothing to achieve it.

CHRISTOPHER HILL

Balliol College, Oxford.

SIR,—The letter of William Rust replying to Strachey in your issue of May 4th contains many statements such as these:

> There is no way out except by the fight of the working class against the warmongers of all countries.
>
> The British anti-war fighters are fighting alongside their German comrades for the ending of the war.

They illustrate the thesis of the British Communists that the power of the working class and the future welfare of the world can best be established by weakening the Allied resistance to Nazi Germany under a naive belief that a parallel process would take place in Germany.

Will they kindly indicate as clearly as possible how the weakening of Allied resistance would result in the ends desired and not, as most of us think, in the supremacy of Hitler? Such a weakening (by whatever polite name it be called) would obviously automatically assist the Nazis. While the Nazis are in power defeatist propaganda can only have the effect of seating them even more firmly in the saddle

and postponing indefinitely the uprising of the German anti-war forces. The German Left failed to win power even during the post-war period of slump and disillusionment. Imagine the state of opinion in Germany if Hitler wins this war, when the most crudely Chauvinistic country in the world will be flushed with victory after defeating most of Europe. How then in the name of Harry Pollitt would the German workers have a grasshopper's chance of "defeating the plans of their Imperialist warmongers"?

Any easing of the German position which might result from anti-war propaganda in this country would be exploited, not by the German Left, but by the Nazis and their war machine. Why must the Communists try incessantly to pave the way for the triumphant march of German militarism? For that can be the only possible result of their activities until circumstances arise which give the German anti-war forces a reasonable chance of success. At present the Communist formula boils down to this: "Let us in our fight against Nazi Germany throw up the sponge on the off-chance that after Germany has achieved an easy victory the German Left will somehow obtain power and wipe out German Imperialism."

The Comrades see only the Imperialist element in the war and refuse to take part in it on the ground that victory would mean the strengthening of the Allied imperialisms *vis-à-vis* the German. The same people urged that every support should be given to the Republican forces in the Spanish Civil War, which, like the present struggle, involved many separate issues. The war in Spain was mainly a fight for freedom and liberty but that did not alter the fact that a Franco victory with German and Italian help was everywhere regarded as a dangerous threat to the strategic position of the British Empire. That was the main reason for German intervention as Left-wing critics of the British Government were quick to point out . . . All that is needed to damn a cause in the eyes of the British Communists is for a British Government to back it. No doubt if the British Government had intervened on the side of the Spanish Republic many members of the International Brigade would have quickly discovered that they were fighting an Imperialist war.

The name of Liebknecht has been bandied about by some of your columnists. Would he have "attacked his own ruling gang" if his country had been a liberal democracy, in which Communist propaganda and conscientious objection had been permitted, which was fighting against a military dictatorship that had stamped out all the elementary individual liberties, had overrun eight other States and broken every pledge it had given? To uproot a fact from different circumstances and times and to apply it rigidly may be illogical and rather stupid but it has the advantage of relieving the Comrades from undue mental effort. HUGH THOMAS

The Square, Ammanford.

THE U.L.F.

SIR,—Mr. L. S. Schultz in his letter in your last issue repudiates the suggestion that the policy of the U.L.F. is dictated by a very active leadership, implying that it is reached by the active democratic co-operation of the 4,000 members. His example in support of this contention—the long discussions which took place on the war issue—does not, however, indicate any general tendency to democracy. To begin with, the number of members who voted on that issue was only 1,500, less than 40 per cent. of the full membership. On other issues the proportion was much smaller. What percentage of the membership does Mr. Schultz think would have approved the message of greeting sent to Kuusinen by the U.L.F. Liverpool Conference? How many sections had "given a full term's discussion" to the question of the actions of the French Government, a subject on which scarcely any reliable evidence was then available?

But there is a more important point. Mr. Schultz denies the Labour Party's statement that the work of the U.L.F. for the last two years "has been a complete failure from the Labour Party point of view." He instances the help given in strikes and elections and the general advance towards a more progressive outlook among students—achievements for which the U.L.F. can rightly claim credit. But the main tasks of a Socialist organisation in the Universities—over-riding all other considerations—are surely those of training the largest possible number of active and well-informed people who when they leave the Universities will work in their local Labour Parties and constitute a body of Labour sympathisers in the Civil Service and the Professions. It is not enough to convert students to Socialism in the abstract; they must be won over to the support of the only organisation which can bring Socialism in this country—the Labour Party. It is in this task that the U.L.F., faithfully bound as it is to the C.P. line, has so signally failed: and the startling success of the Oxford University Democratic Socialist Club, which in three weeks has attained a membership of 350, demonstrates the existence of a vast demand for which the U.L.F. in recent years has completely failed to cater.

2 St. John's Street, Oxford. C. A. R. CROSLAND, Chairman, O.U.D.S.C.

THACKERAY

SIR,—A definitive edition of the Collected Letters of William Makepeace Thackeray is being prepared by Mr. Gordon N. Ray for publication by the Harvard University Press. The edition is authorised by Thackeray's granddaughter and grandson, Mrs. Hester Thackeray Fuller and Mr. T. D. Ritchie, and the great mass of unpublished letters and diaries in the possession of the family have been placed at the editor's disposal. Other holders of important Thackeray correspondence are also co-operating. Mr. Gordon N. Ray would be glad if other possessors of autograph Thackeray letters would communicate with him at the Widener Library, Cambridge, Massachusetts. H. S. MILFORD,

Oxford University Press, Oxford. On behalf of the Harvard University Press.

PARACHUTE

SIR,— Dropping gently from the skies,
Nazis, after further loot,
Plan to take us by surprise;
Si vis pacem, para chute.

74 Harlyn Drive, Pinner, Middlesex. STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

COFFEE AND TURKS

You may have to cut out the '65 brandy in these times of stress. But you can still revel in the matchless aroma of fine Turkish cigarettes, and pay no more than the price of ordinary Virginias, if you ask for

De Reszke TURKS

THINGS YOU OUGHT TO KNOW. Turkish tobacco, of which the British Government have made large purchases from our ally Turkey, is the finest cigarette tobacco the world produces. The 'chain smoker' can confidently take to Turkish, which have less than half the nicotine content of Virginia cigarettes.

Current Literature

MORE MRS. FITZHERBERT

The Letters of Mrs. Fitzherbert. By SHANE LESLIE. *Burns Oates.* 15s.

This volume is the companion to *The Life of Mrs. Fitzherbert*, by the same author, published somewhat hastily last autumn without an index. The index to the two volumes is to be found in the present work, and consists of nine perfunctory pages of name references, which are neither complete nor accurate. Such indexes may fob off the time-pressed reviewer but are a fund of mischief for the future historian.

Mr. Shane Leslie has had access to all the known surviving papers concerning Mrs. Fitzherbert. In his first volume he made use of this material to compile his *Life*; in this second volume we are given the documents themselves, which range from unimportant notes to Thomas Coutts, the banker, to letters from the Duke of Kent concerning his matrimonial future after the death of Princess Charlotte—a miscellaneous bag to delight the scholar and the bookworm. Some of the most interesting items emerge into the light of day from the Windsor Archives, which have become the final repository of that mysterious box deposited in Thomas Coutts' strong-room in 1833 under the seals of the Duke of Wellington, Lord Albemarle and Lord Stourton. The curious history of this box is testimony to the phenomenal power of the Duke of Wellington to suppress documentary evidence. His own rule was to burn all the letters he received and whenever he could he burnt other people's letters too. In August, 1833, he nearly set Mrs. Fitzherbert's chimney on fire burning all the letters exchanged between her and George IV, except those she insisted on keeping. These lucky survivors, together with the marriage certificate of 1785 and a will made by the Prince in 1796, leaving all his property to "Maria Fitzherbert, my Wife, the wife of my heart and soul," were sealed up and sent to Coutts' bank. After Mrs. Fitzherbert's death in 1837 four packets of letters were taken from the bank to the Duke by her executors, and almost certainly burnt: we hear no more of them. What was left was reluctantly sealed up again at the bank by her trustees, Lord Albemarle and Lord Stourton. The Duke threatened to move for an injunction in Chancery if they attempted to open any papers. In 1841 the trustees tried again. The Duke replied: "I consider it my duty to protest and I do protest most solemnly." His protest was effective. In 1846 Lord Albemarle, the surviving trustee, wanted the legal position defined. There was no question then of opening the papers, so the Duke was ready to agree that Lord Albemarle had "greater" control over the documents than himself—but still not enough to open them. Lord Albemarle died in 1849 and the Duke in 1852. In 1855 Lord Stourton's brother, a Catholic, wished to defend Mrs. Fitzherbert against reflections on her character in Lord Holland's *Memoirs of the Whig Party*, and applied to Coutts for the box. Lord John Russell, however, who was then Prime Minister, followed the Duke's view of the matter and prepared an injunction in Chancery. Two more futile attempts were made to get at the papers in 1877 and 1878 by an executor of Lord Albemarle. On this occasion Coutts took legal advice and decided that Queen Victoria had inherited the Duke's veto! At last in 1905, Mr. Wilkins, who was writing a book on Mrs. Fitzherbert, asked Sir Alfred Fripp to ask Lady Warwick to ask King Edward VII if he might see the papers, and the bank capitulated. A lifeguardsman carried the precious docket to Windsor, where it now rests finally in the Private Archives.

Mrs. Fitzherbert adopted two children, Minney Seymour and her niece Marianne Smythe, and naturally there has been speculation whether either of these two girls was the child of George IV. Mr. Leslie rejects the first but is ready to acknowledge the latter, on the slender evidence of a family tradition. It is possible, however, to contradict this hypothesis by the aid of the material Mr. Leslie himself has collected. In support of the family tradition the only facts are (1) that Marianne was about the right age, (2) that she called Mrs. Fitzherbert "mama" and was called by her "my child," (3) that some pages in the Catholic register of births at Brighton have been destroyed, (4) that Jack Smythe, whose child Marianne was supposed to be, is known to have had no children by "the Widow Strickland," his wife. As regards age, three portraits of Marianne are extant, dated 1814 and 1824, all three representing a young girl. In 1822 we read in a letter that she attended her first ball; she was therefore about seventeen to nineteen. By another letter we know her birthday was May 16th. She was therefore born between 1802 and 1805. Mr. Leslie abstains from stating for what years the pages in the birth register are missing, but in those years Mrs. Fitzherbert was living openly with the Regent at Brighton, and it is extraordinary that nobody should have noticed her pregnancy so exposed to the public eye. The appellations "mama" and "my child" are of no significance as the same terms were used by Mrs. Fitzherbert and Minney Seymour, whom none but Mr. Aspinall and Professor Webster believe to be the child of George IV by Mrs. Fitzherbert or anyone else. The Widow Strickland is called "barren" by Mr. Leslie because she was never known to have had a child: on that basis Mrs. Fitzherbert was barren. But even if Marianne was not the Widow Strickland's child she may still have been the child of Jack Smythe; the possibility, or rather the probability, of her illegitimacy never seems to have occurred to Mr. Leslie. The clinching evidence, however, that Marianne was *not* the child of George IV is the letter of Mrs. Fitzherbert to the Regent of August 15th, 1814, wherein she recapitulates all his obligations to her in order to get her allowance increased from £6,000 to £10,000 a year. There is no mention of Marianne in that letter, but there *is* a reference to Minney Seymour whose education was proving expensive.

As for Mr. Aspinall and Professor Webster, they believe that Minney Seymour was George IV's child because George IV thought so himself. They have equally good grounds for believing that George IV never married Mrs. Fitzherbert and that he led the heavy Dragoons in the charge at Salamanca. "Didn't I?" he used to say to Wellington in later years. "I have often heard your Majesty say so," the Duke used to reply, with greater discretion than our modern historians. RALPH PARTRIDGE

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The Beginning of the Third Republic in France. A History of the National Assembly (February-September, 1871). By REV. F. H. BRABANT, Canon of Winchester. *Macmillan.* 25s.

This is a disappointing book, for it might and should have been so much better than it is. It is a large work of over 500 pages and covers a period of eight months. They were months of crucial importance in the history of modern France, for they settled three major questions. The terms of peace between Germany and France were negotiated by Bismarck and Thiers. Thiers and his bourgeois government at Bordeaux and later Versailles liquidated the Paris rising which we know as the Commune. The National Assembly, with its large anti-Republican majority, laid the foundations, which time proved to be remarkably strong, of the Third Republic. All these mighty events are of course covered by Mr. Brabant's narrative. Five hundred pages are by no means excessive for an intensive study and analysis of them. Mr. Brabant has the apparatus of knowledge required for such a task. He has clearly laboured long in the main thoroughfares and the by-ways of his period and the result is that his pages are packed with facts, large and minute, important and unimportant, and the footnotes are full of references and cross-references to authorities, well known and obscure.

Unfortunately, though he has the apparatus of knowledge, he has not got the apparatus of historical judgment, synthesis, or exposition. A serious student of the period or a future historian may dig about in his pages and find a great deal of useful and important material. But if read as a connected account of events and as an historical explanation of them, it has small value. There are two main reasons for its failure. The first is that Mr. Brabant seems to be unable to distinguish between relevant and irrelevant historical facts. He is one of those writers, unfortunately by no means rare, who cannot restrain themselves from putting down a fact which occurs to them, merely because it is in some way connected with what they are writing about, and without any consideration of whether it is *relevant* to what they are writing about. A good example of this is his handling of the question of fusion between the Legitimists and the Orleanists. This was certainly an important question, for it had an influence—though not so great an influence as one would conclude from this book—upon the chances of a restoration of monarchy in 1871. Mr. Brabant deals with it off and on in the first 216 pages of his book and then devotes a solid chapter of 133 pages to it. Some of this chapter is extremely interesting, some of it is faintly amusing, but a great deal of it is mere meandering through historical tittle-tattle about rather stupid and politically unimportant persons. Like all writers who have a poor sense for relevancy and irrelevancy of facts, Mr. Brabant betrays the failing in his style; for instance he writes of the wife of the Comte de Chambord: "Simple and natural in her talk, with her fine hair and white teeth, dignified in her black dress and plain white collar, she stitched away at her tapestry, and grew old and deaf in an isolation she gladly accepted . . ." or of the Baron de la Rochette: "The Baron de la Rochette, sad-faced with grey whiskers, under his cold and courteous irony, was violent in his affections and aversions." Presumably Mr. Brabant does not mean that Marie Thérèse Béatrix Gaetano stitched with her white teeth or that the Baron de la Rochette kept his grey whiskers under his cold and courteous irony. The reason why he says so is that he fails to see that the white teeth are irrelevant to the tapestry and the grey whiskers to the irony.

The second reason for the book's failure is a lack of historical judgment or perspective in the author. This is evident both in large things and in small. The Commune, for instance, is a very large thing and Mr. Brabant devotes a chapter to it. He begins with the disarming statement that, as he is not writing a history of France, but a political study of the National Assembly, he proposes to describe the Commune as seen by the Government and the Assembly. He then gives a one-sided account of the rising and its suppression, in which the crimes of the Communards are described, but nothing is said of the methods of suppression. And although Mr. Brabant paints a highly coloured picture of the life of the bourgeoisie and royalists at Versailles, nothing is said of the treatment of the prisoners brought to Versailles. After all, this was part of the Commune "as seen by the Government and the Assembly." Later on in the book the reader suddenly comes upon an entirely disconnected subsection, with the title

"After the Commune," consisting of less than three pages, in which we are told that Thiers "has been severely criticised . . . for the cruel suppression of the Commune" and that "if he had not had to count with the Assembly, he would have been merciful to those who survived the civil war." Practically no evidence is given and there is no adequate discussion of the relation of Thiers and the Assembly to the rising. The whole thing is out of perspective when compared to the grey whiskers of the Baron. This lack of judgment or perspective is also evident in Mr. Brabant's rosy view of Thiers and of the Comte de Chambord. Or consider his statement that between 1789 and 1871 Paris had been the "undisputed ruler of France" and that in the Commune for the first time the provinces refused to follow the revolutionary lead of the capital. This statement shows a complete misjudgment of the revolution of 1848, for in the elections which followed that revolution and in the riots and risings in Paris which followed the election, the struggle was between the provinces and Paris, and Paris was completely defeated. LEONARD WOOLF

MISTER PUFF

The History of an Advertising Agency. By RALPH M. HOWER. *Oxford University Press.* 21s. 6d.

Among the by-products of modern competitive society, there are few parasitic growths quite so remarkable as the profession of advertising. Fifty years ago, it had scarcely begun to develop. To-day, on both sides of the Atlantic—but particularly in London and the larger American cities—it maintains huge organisations, pays big salaries (at least to a handful of specially favoured members) and keeps its foot wedged across half a dozen commercial thresholds. It has acquired, moreover, a passionate conviction of its own importance. Round the history and the *personnel* of a prosperous advertising agency, what a novel Zola might have written in the style of *Au Bonheur des Dames!* Flaubert, too, during his latest and most pessimistic period, might have outdone the effect of *Bouvard et Pecuchet* by cataloguing the examples of human *bêtise* and rock-bottom banality that the existence of an advertising agent would have brought within his reach. But, on the whole, it is Zola who should be ressurected to compose the great and, as yet, unwritten advertising novel. How he would have enjoyed describing the laborious, intricate, absurd and yet fascinating processes by which the average advertisement is put together: the cynical conferences behind the scenes—"*Look here, what about having a girl? On a sofa. You know, like 'Dark Enchantment' chocolates. . . .*" "*Sorry, old boy; but sex is out! The client won't stand for it.*" "*If you don't mind my saying so* (in acid feminine tones) *I think your ideas are all wet. Nobody seems to be taking this account seriously!*" Or the pompous full-dress conferences for the client's benefit, at which the completed scheme is submitted with appropriate speeches, and "schedules" are discussed and "media" analysed, and some thousands or tens-of-thousands of pounds are allocated, while everyone looks unnaturally taut and earnest, laughing loudly at the client's jokes and lighting his cigarette. . . . These are some of the minor humours of contemporary advertising—the profession has an undoubtedly funny as well as an exceedingly tragic side—and only a novelist of exceptional vigour could hope to do them justice.

For the advertising world resembles no other world. In a trade magazine distributed among American insurance agents, syphilis was recently listed as one of the "vocational diseases" of actors; but, although the lives of the advertising profession are not notoriously chaste, were the

LATEST **FABER** BOOKS

The Navy at War

BERNARD STUBBS, official B.B.C. naval observer, takes you with him on active service, and in this thrilling book covers the British and French Navies at war, U-boats, Contraband Control, Convoys, Motor Torpedo Boats, the Merchant Navy, the Fleet Air Arm, Magnetic Mines and Minesweeping, Women in the Navy, Naval Training, the German Navy.
WITH 50 SUPERB PHOTOGRAPHS. 8/6

C. E. M. Joad

JOURNEY THROUGH THE WAR MIND is the title of Mr. Joad's new book, and in the course of his journey he interviews a nice patriot, and a nasty, a mewer for blood, a Communist, a Yogi pacifist, a common-sense pacifist and a cynic. "The book is alive, stimulating, vigorous, the best bit of war literature so far published."—*Reynolds News.* 8/6

Voice from the Wilderness

R. W. THOMPSON. Not only Czechs, Austrians, Germans and Poles, but vast migrations of Nazis themselves are settling in a land so vast and rich as to be capable of giving life to the entire population of Europe. This is the record of a search for these lost tribes of Europe—a travel book of high quality and an intensely romantic and moving story. By the author of *Home from Ham* and *Land of To-morrow.* 12/6

Watch Below

WILLIAM McFEE's new novel is the First Fiction Choice of the *Times Literary Supplement*, which says: "A jewel of a novel. A writer of rare imaginative power, a story-teller of almost faultless workmanship . . . the vividness, the insight and tolerant humanity of Mr. McFee's picture . . . are beyond praise." By the author of *The Beachcomber* and *Derelicts.* 9/6

Best Stories of

THEODORA BENSON. These brilliant tales are unbeatable entertainment. Some of the finest stories are set in the Dutch East Indies. 7/6

Microbe's Kiss

GEORGE BRADDON. Ideal escape reading. "Don't miss *Microbe's Kiss*, which has a fine Lyceum melodrama atmosphere. Crime among doctors with an ambitious gangstress nurse—very readable."—*Observer.*
Faber Popular Books. 7/6

The Dark Door

MAURICE COLLIS. "A most extraordinary thriller. This author, after an administrative career in the East, has a fund of out-of-the-way knowledge to draw upon. And he does draw on it. But what is so interesting is that he does it so simply and naturally."—*John O'London's.* "Deeply ingenious and close-packed with wit and observation."—*Observer.* By the author of *Siamese White* and *Sanda Mala.* 7/6

Technique for Beauty

JANE GORDON. This complete encyclopaedia of good looks is based on a sound background of medical knowledge and should become the classic in its field. Separate chapters on hair, complexion, figure, diet, age, hands, nails, legs, feet and eyes. Special wartime section. *Profusely illustrated.* 10/6

The Signature of Time

NOEL JAQUIN, author of *The Hand of Man*, is recognised as one of the greatest living authorities on the human hand and its interpretation. His system of psychological diagnosis is simple, effective and so deadly accurate that all possibility of error is eliminated. A book by a scientist for all who want to get the best out of life. *Illustrated.* 8/6

Astrology in Everyday Life

RUPERT GLEADOW, after a brilliant career at Oxford, is a member of the General Astrological Council of England. Whether you study the subject scientifically or merely search for amusement you will find this a fascinating and authoritative book. "The best possible evidence of the changing attitude in England, even among the educated classes, to what fifty years ago was the discredited science of astrology."—*New Statesman. Illus.* 8/6

same survey extended to cover the publicity racket, alcoholism and nervous disorders would no doubt take precedence. Those who live by illusion must expect to die by it. And since the advertising agent exists largely by "thinking down," by counterfeiting enthusiasm he does not feel, sometimes even attempting to stimulate a demand for merchandise he knows to be worthless, his personal equilibrium is often shaky. Hence the worried, haggard or inflamed, unclassifiable and usually unhappy faces of advertising men who have popped out to have a quick one at half-past-eleven. Hence the cold beady eyes of advertising women (fighting for dear life against client or colleague) as they perk through the grill-room in their smart little numbers. Here *cameraderie* takes the place of intimacy, sharpness of intelligence or understanding. Schooled to think always in terms of the second-rate, and to reduce every idea and every human motive to its lowest common denominator, the advertising man gradually lowers his own standards and still further lowers, in his estimation, the standards of the public he is addressing, till other standards and other interests have begun to wither away. He learns to eat and drink advertising: he generally sleeps with it. He shaves to the rhythm of a persuasive slogan—glimpses a brilliant effective lay-out in the dregs of his coffee cup.

Considering how large and decisive a part advertising, direct or indirect, plays in the life of an ordinary citizen, it is odd how little he knows of the profession's mysteries. Is he aware, for instance, of the elementary fact that most advertisers do not pay the agent (apart from what are euphemistically termed "art-charges") but that the agent receives a commission from the newspaper or magazine in which the advertisement appears? Has he any inkling of the devious negotiations that go on between the agent and the editor: or that a certain amount of free editorial publicity is often bought by a certain bulk of advertising, a bargain being sometimes arrived at when the space is booked? Those recommendations on the feature pages are not entirely gratuitous. The Fashion Expert or the Beauty Editress is not an altruist. She is less concerned with the problems of her readers than with questions of revenue.

In England, however, as compared to the United States, the science of advertising is embryonic. Sponsored radio has not yet developed on the American scale. Few English advertisers have either the money or the imagination to invest in the gigantic highly coloured "double-page spreads," celebrating the beauties of an automobile or the qualities of a rye whiskey, which contribute to the upkeep of the costlier American journals. As the dim pre-War neon-lighting of Shaftesbury Avenue to the rippling incandescent blaze of Broadway, so are our native British to transatlantic methods. There is special interest, then—both for advertising agents and untutored but inquisitive members of the public who wish to ascertain just how they are forcibly fed—in Mr. Ralph M. Hower's solid volume. Solemnly, thoroughly and, of course, eulogistically—Mr. Hower is an Assistant Professor of Business History and his monograph an Harvard Business History Study—he traces through six hundred pages the triumphant growth of "one of the oldest and largest advertising agencies in the world . . . from 1869, when it was a one-room, one-man enterprise devoted solely to selling space in a few weekly religious newspapers, down to the present large corporation. . . . Every phase of the business is covered so far as sources permit. . . ." The Ayer agency has done much creditable work; and many examples of their work, both good and bad, are included by way of illustration. Both the vulgar and the distinguished may have served their purpose: for in advertising all standards of merits are relative, and aesthetic taste, where it exists, must assume a subordinate rôle.

> There was, and still is (writes Mr. Hower) some confusion between advertising art and fine art. Many an advertiser has paid dearly for a drawing or painting which, though of real artistic merit, was of little worth as advertisement. . . Advertising art frequently affords the observer pleasure of a high order, but that is not its ultimate purpose. It is a commercial tool. . . The artist is not wholly free to express his own ideas in his own way: he has to present a point of view defined beforehand by someone else. . . Whatever art emerges from the composition and design depends upon its functional fitness.

As long as the society it serves is chaotic and charmless, the productions of modern ad-advertising are bound to follow suit; they will reflect the ugliness and sterility of the interests behind them. Exceptions may occur: but they will be incidental—the artist will remain a picturesque interloper, the spoiled pet of some particularly enlightened plutocrat. Mr. Bower's book is rather painstaking than entertaining; but it may drop a shaft of light on to a subject where light is needed. COPYWRITER

ROGUE UNMASKED

The Statecraft of Machiavelli. By H. BUTTERFIELD. *Bell.* 6*s.*

Rambling through the Renaissance, breathing the poisoned air of Italian courts where courtiers whisper ruthless, cynical schemes in their sovereign's ear, we naturally pause to catch a glimpse of the prototype of these creatures. But Machiavelli is not here; and straightaway we are transported to the lonely study of an exile—an unsuccessful diplomat caught napping at the last revolution. There he sits busily writing sheets of what we imagine to be wily advice to some statesman. We peer over his shoulder and are astonished to read such familiar claptrap as "The classics contain everything of importance," "History repeats itself." The page is covered with academic abstractions. The devil, it appears after all, is a don.

He is discussing whether England will break her alliance with France. Stacked with historical examples, his mind considers the problem with infinite subtlety. A wise statesman would act thus and so, a foolish in this way, if such and such occurred. Every contingency is considered. It is all most interesting; but it is rather more important to consider how Henry VIII would act. Unfortunately he has missed the boat. The publications of retired diplomats to-day often tell a similar story. A strong prince and a militia are his practical suggestions for saving Italy—efficacious three centuries later, but remote enough from reality in his own time. In fact, Machiavelli is only modern in the sense that he took current ideas and drove them to their logical absurdity. Had not the superiority of the Ancients been demonstrated in law, art and literature? Very well: let the Ancients teach us politics. It is perfectly simple if men will apply the lessons of history to their own times. Less inflexible, more practical historians like Guicciardini might protest that circumstances altered cases, but that was all nonsense. Although his advice was invaluable to conspirators and usurpers, used by Napoleon, amplified by Hitler, his books are not a series of hints, but a system designed to meet every contingency. The methods which had served Republican Rome so well, must be applied to the same situations in his age with scholastic rigour. Then they will infallibly protect the prince from fate and fortune.

We are indebted for this illumination to Mr. Butterfield in his clever, stimulating and readable book. Machiavelli no longer is a bodiless figure floating in some analysis of political science. His historical imagination shows us how, so far from being a realist, he made the study of politics more theoretical than ever. He analyses in penetrating chapters the cult of antiquity and the rise of the inductive method in that diffuse affair, the Renaissance. He is not concerned with what other people have thought Machiavelli said, but what in fact he did say. Yet is it not possible that Machiavelli achieved fame by virtue of his own stupidity? Guicciardini, Bacon, Halifax, all those who have analysed political action, have never had the temerity to claim that their observations are everlastingly immutably true. To be accepted as a great political scientist one must apparently be slightly mad—or shall we say blind to half of the truth? Some believe man is good and intelligent, others that he is wicked or stupid. They all believe they can unveil those fundamentals on which politics rest. They believe they have discovered an infallible method of deducing truth and the compelling motive behind human action. If they are as forceful and enlightening as Machiavelli or Marx, we are faced with a brilliant array of platitude and half-truth, the product of a mind which fails to observe the complexity of human nature and society, and, in so failing, arrives at truths which more accurate and understanding men could never achieve.

The author states the case for truth, but mistaken estimates of a man are historically as important as the truth itself. Machiavelli believed that he was examining politics as they are and not as they ought to be. In spite of his method, he unconsciously took those examples from the Ancients which corresponded with precepts already in his mind. He and those who puncture the political philosophies of the Elect are rarely popular. They are dismissed as sterile and merely destructive. But, unhappily, those who have a low opinion of human nature have much to be said for them. They point a platitude, which, as Professor Carr has demonstrated, is often disregarded: to know what is, is vital for discussing what ought to be. NOEL ANNAN

EMBLEMS AND DEVICES

Studies in Seventeenth-Century Imagery. Volume One. By MARIO PRAZ. *Warburg Institute.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

The title of this slim but close-packed volume is misleading; it is both more and less than a series of studies in seventeenth-century imagery. It is more, since Professor Mario Praz has not confined himself to the seventeenth century, but has discovered Emblems and Devices in all periods, tracing them from the Egyptian hieroglyphics in which they find their source to their Victorian decadence in the work of Cruikshank. It is also less, since the attention is confined to Emblems and Devices, and the connection between these and other types of imagery is never clearly brought out. The book is, in fact, a series of expanded notes on the Emblem. It is the fruit of wide research and it is generously illustrated with reproductions from European Emblem Books.

It is a difficult book to read because the interest is of such divers kinds and there is no one centre from which the subject can be seen in any perspective. Historical information is interspersed with bibliographical material or descriptive cataloguing, and, here and there, a tantalisingly undeveloped general idea. For instance, on page 51 (2) we read:

> How is it, we ask ourselves, that devices, which had been in existence for a long time, as the writers of devices themselves admitted . . . were invested with metaphysical powers and became enormously important in the sixteenth century and in Italy? It happened with devices as with

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HAMISH HAMILTON

> many other tendencies which develop their full meaning only in congenial surroundings. . . . The medium . . . becomes at a given moment an excellent conductor, and what used to be a hardly audible sound, is multiplied in endless echoes.

But, having raised this important question, why device and emblem should so flourish in a particular period, and having suggested that the answer will lie in the time-spirit itself, Professor Praz is content to let the matter drop. Similarly he recognises that the emblem habit sprang from two apparently contradictory motives (p. 155):

> I imagine that it will not have escaped the notice of those who have read so far that there is a contrast of tendencies in the use of the emblem. On the one side emblematics, following the tracks of hieroglyphics, aims at establishing a mode of expression which only a few may understand; in a word an esoteric language. On the other hand, it aims at being a way of making ethical and religious truths accessible to all, even to the illiterate and to children, through the lure of pictures.

But here again no attempt is made to account for these two coexisting motives or to reconcile them. Our curiosity is whetted, but not satisfied. Did our ancestors delight in emblems in the mood of Milton's Raphael when he asks:

> What if Earth
> Be but the shadow of Heav'n, and things therein
> Each to other like, more than on earth is thought?

or did they compose them only with a didactic motive, to make available through the eye what the intelligence was too dull to apprehend? Or can these two conceptions be seen as one, the emblem writers behaving towards the ignorant as God behaves towards mankind?

Professor Mario Praz and the Warburg Institute have done a service in drawing attention to the wealth of Emblem literature and to its importance as a key to the taste and, indeed, to the world-picture of the times in which it flourished. The book itself is packed with information, including a fascinating account of the way in which the Jesuits seized upon the Emblem fashion and exploited it for didactic purposes. But the total effect is confusing, owing, I think, to the author's indecision about the scope and purpose of his book. The second volume promised, which is to contain "a full bibliography of emblem literature," should be more useful, since, in this first volume, the bibliographical material is so embedded in the text as to be of little use for reference, while the few general ideas are so concealed amid pages of information as to be hard to piece together.

JOAN BENNETT

THE EARLY MARX

Karl Marx in His Earlier Writings. By H. P. ADAMS. *Allen and Unwin.* 7s. 6d.

In his careful and scholarly book, Mr. Adams has done admirably a really useful piece of work On the basis of the vast Moscow edition of the writings of Marx and Engels, he has provided us with a careful analysis of Marx's thought up to the famous attack on Proudhon. Mr. Adams begins with the schoolboy essays and ends with a Marx whose main ideas have already assumed their mature form. Only those who have traversed the broad ocean of these early works, many of them, it must be confessed, profoundly dull and unlikely ever to be translated, can appreciate the toil that has gone into reducing them to an ordered whole. We owe real gratitude to Mr. Adams for his labours.

His book makes one see more clearly than ever before how much Marx was the man of his generation, how complicated were the strands which contributed to the ultimate pattern of his thought. There is a romantic in the younger Marx upon whom a good essay is still to be written, a Marx who owes more than the books have allowed to what may be termed the progressive element in Rousseau. And Mr. Adams makes as clear as it has ever been made the elements in Marx's intellectual evolution which were responsible for the transition from radicalism to socialism. The development of a mind is rarely simple; and it is clear from the writings and the letters that the environment which compelled the change was as various as the Germany then struggling into articulate self-expression. The big difference one notes between the young Marx and the mass of his radical contemporaries is his sense of the interaction of the idea and the deed, and his inability to accept the defeat and disillusion from which they so deeply suffered. Where they were overcome by the stifling power of reaction, he had the will and energy to overcome it.

H. J. LASKI

NEW WRITING

Folios of New Writing, Spring 1940. Edited by JOHN LEHMANN. *Hogarth Press.* 5s.

"There is no such thing," the *Daily Express* proclaimed recently, "as culture in wartime"—a discovery which has rather an air of *parti pris*. At the best of times we have not looked to Shoe Lane for cultural perspective, and what Low or Mr. Hickey gives us on one page we must expect to have violently snatched away on the next. We aren't surprised when a book-reviewer (as happened in the *Evening Standard* the other night) writes a column on "The Castlerosse of his day" and it turns out that he is referring to—Horace Walpole. Evidently in these matters there is no such thing as culture, in wartime or at any other time, but in that case why bother with Horace Walpole at all?

Despite the Beaverbrook ban, good books continue to be published and cultural activity persists. Mr. John Lehmann, after announcing the death of *New Writing* in his Christmas number, has found it possible to resume; *Folios of New Writing* will appear, let us hope, as long as the paper supply lasts. The present number makes an excellent counterblast to those who think that only trash should be written in wartime. Among other things it contains poems by Spender, William Plomer, David Gascoyne, H. B. Mallalieu; stories by Rosamund Lehmann, John Summerfield, H. T. Hopkinson; and unclassifiable items by Henry Green and George Barker. It is rather smaller in quantity and make-up than its predecessor, but this means that less space has been given to foreign reporting, a side of *New Writing* which at times in the past I have found monotonous. At the moment, especially, a careful description of Mexican peons or a Burmese tin-mine is apt to appear rather flat. The most vivid piece of reporting here, though it records a phase of the war already past, is André Chamson's *A Liaison Officer's Notebook*. He describes the war "four or five kilometres deep" in front of the Maginot Line, a spongy half-frozen waste, with soldiers squatting under umbrellas within range of the enemy, Basque peasants coming face to face with the "sale Boche," a priest in command of a casemate. What particularly impressed him was a hatred of the Germans quite different from that of the last war.

> While we were chatting, I saw, through the camouflage, above the enemy line three hundred metres away, the pacifist streamers unfurled by the Germans during these last days. What's worst about this war is that the whole thing's so corrupted. These appeals to fraternity, which would have been so fine had they but been sincere, merely make our soldiers laugh. "Don't fire—we won't fire either" has become the most atrocious of lies. It's the trap laid by the killer afraid of missing his shot. That's the result of a few years of Hitler.

The masquerades of parachute-men and consequent street lynchings in Brussels and other towns where they have been dropped have given us in the last few days a further glimpse of the meaning of total warfare. At the time when he was writing—four or five months ago—Chamson was deeply aware of impending catastrophe, the sense of a larger horror which never left him even on quiet evenings when he no longer "felt" the war. *A Liaison-Officer's Notebook* is apparently part of a book written by M. Chamson since he has been at the front, and I hope Mr. Lehmann will give us more of it in the future.

The longest and the most remarkable piece of writing in *Folios of New Writing* has nothing to do with war: Miss Rosamund Lehmann's *The Red-haired Miss Daintreys*. It is the story, exquisitely remembered and retouched, of a childhood encounter during a holiday in the Isle of Wight. The scene appears with the brightness of one of those landscapes enclosed in an old glass paperweight: sands, broomy cliffs, a paddle-steamer nosing across the bay, here a vigorous game of tennis in the over-dressed Edwardian style, there a party of visitors piling on to a horse-drawn coach. Even more vivid, more surprising, as the author peers into the crystal, is the Daintrey family sitting at a nearby table in the hotel: Ma, gasping and immense, pats the hand of her "poor old dear," a speechless shrivelled old man; round them, like "a flourishing clump of red-hot pokers," are gathered the four daughters, who besides being red-headed are each over six foot tall and when you get to know them quietly remarkable in other ways. Not a great deal happens; Miss Lehmann merely gives us their portraits as they have grown from the memories of an eleven-year-old child (such recollections often begin with a touch of the fabulous); the point of the story is that the four Miss Daintreys were a bit *too* tall, *too* red-haired to last. She did, not, of course, realise that at the time; and the mingling of first impressions and later thinking is half the charm of the story. It is something between a short-story and a cluster of memories; a few loose ends are left dangling—it would have been a mistake to tie them up neatly.

Among the rest I liked particularly Mr. Hopkinson's sketch of a public house, though it leads nowhere, and Mr. Elwell-Sutton's story of a deserter. The ironic ballad by Mr. Plomer, "The Widow's Plot, or She got what was coming to her," seemed to me too mechanical and cruel to be really funny, though at moments it probed effectively. I recommend the poems by Spender, David Gascoyne and H. B. Mallalieu: the "Two Poems" of the last are the best he has written yet. Opinions will differ over Henry Green's picture of a private school in 1914, with which the volume begins, and George Barker's "A Letter to History," with which it ends. I found both disappointing, though the Henry Green has a quality blurred in the writing. But thank goodness *New Writing* is still alive to delight and—at moments—to disappoint us.

G. W. STONIER

IMPERIAL CONSPECTUS

A History of the Gambia. By J. M. GRAY, Judge of the Supreme Court of the Gambia. *Cambridge University Press.* 30s.

Mr. Justice Gray's *History of the Gambia* surveys fully three hundred years in what is one of the smallest of the colonies. His excellent piece of historical writing focuses the fundamental issues as perhaps no attempt on a larger canvas could. Knowing the conditions at first hand (unlike most of the Imperial "research workers" on whom we chiefly depend), Mr. Gray yet lets the facts speak for themselves. He errs if anything on the side of restraint and reticence.

But no one can read far without getting an overwhelming sense of the realities of that notorious "coast." From the beginning—Cada-Mosto's voyage in 1455—there was grievously little on the Gambia itself to attract exploiters of any kind. But for two centuries and more first Portuguese, then Dutch, French, and English, fought each other, more or less hopefully conceiving that this rare harbour might prove a gateway to a greater Africa beyond. Some such venture by Europeans was inevitable, and our own representatives at least were certainly not overburdened with help from the Imperial power. But they were worsted by the poverty of Africa itself—by slow hampered communications, and by the undefeated terrors of the climate. Till our own day the reasonable expectation of life for the men on the spot was perhaps six months, and drink and the devil played their part. In such conditions it was one thing for Downing Street and reformers at Home to make demands and enact laws on paper, and quite another matter to administer the best of laws. It was in fact only in the effort to suppress the slave trade that the British Government at last took unwilling responsibility on its own shoulders, and then only for the port of Bathurst.

There is little here to warrant the view that all had been well had the Africans been left to manage their own affairs. Reading of the petty rivalry of European traders in the earlier centuries, one might wonder whether any "Natives" existed. But the trade was not one-sided. Mr. Gray's work strikingly confirms the inference that by the time of Abolition "the people" of the Gambia proper were a middle class of "middlemen," grown relatively fat on the profits of the slave trade. While there is much else, his freshest point is perhaps that the attack on this trade, more than anything that went before, set the local chiefs and people fighting, not us but one another. When, for example, to compensate them for the loss of Slavers' dues, chiefs were paid an annual grant, things at once began to go wrong. So long as there were dues to be collected from many passers-by, chiefs, subchiefs and probably every one else got a "sweetener." A quarterly or annual lump sum now went to the chief, and there it stayed! The discontents and disorders resulting, and covert attempts to maintain slavery, kept the Gambia in a turmoil for half a century or more. These disorders, there is reason to judge, compelled intervention by the British (and French) Governments, and some belated attempt at serious administration.

The moral of Mr. Gray's well-told tale, I would venture, is not the good or evil done, but the vast responsibilities still waiting to be shouldered, in a new spirit. The Cambridge Press are to be congratulated on venturing this solid book at such a time. It is for University and other libraries, here and abroad, to play their part. W. M. MACMILLAN

NOT NEGLIGIBLE

Diego Rivera. By BERTRAM WOLFE. *Robert Hale.* 21s.

European settlers on the American continent have produced little that is of value in the way of painting. Perhaps it is in compensation that there has grown up a school of artist-worshipping writing which, in high-mettled nervous excitability, adjectival rapture and jocular familiarity, outdoes even Meier-Graefe. Mr. Bertram Wolfe belongs to this school. Only an extreme interest in what he has to say makes readable the book he has written on Diego Rivera.

By internal evidence one can deduce that Mr. Wolfe has known Rivera since 1923. In 1924 he was on sufficiently friendly terms to persuade the painter to resign from the Communist Party, and more recently he has collaborated in writing *Portrait of Mexico* and *Portrait of America*. He understands very well, if not quite impartially, the maze of Left-Wing wrangling which has been Rivera's background since he returned to Mexico in 1920. Mr. Wolfe has met most of the people concerned in the biography and has been on the spot for some at least of the events he has to describe. It will be seen then that Mr. Wolfe is almost as well placed as an observer can be. For what he calls his "credo" he quotes Carlyle and Dr. Johnson to the effect that his business is to tell the truth as he sees it, risking partiality and the possibility of giving offence, for the sake of a contemporary record of the man and his background.

The first features of the portrait of Rivera which emerges are personal. We note his hugeness (300 lbs.), his ugliness (statements reinforced by photographs), his independent mind (he is of liberal middle class origin) and his generosity. Rivera has been free with his kisses, his money, his energy and his embroideries on the truth. The author, though well aware of this last characteristic, still draws on Rivera for evidence. Mr. Wolfe is enchanted with his hero and with reason. A more picturesque figure than this enormous clever braggart, with his six-shooter and his sex-appeal, it would be hard to find.

Fascinating as he is as a character, Rivera is even more worthy of attention as an artist. He is the leading exponent of what is called "social realism," and as a successful painter of enormous wall-pictures he is the most notable example of the reaction against the private connoisseurs' art of the School of Paris and its imitators elsewhere. The Rivera solution to the problem of the artist's isolation from the public, is to put painting on a level with any other form of work, and to leave the art to take care of itself. In his mural paintings Rivera was attempting not only to paint for the workers, but also to paint as a worker. There is nothing in this plan to prevent the artist from fulfilling himself, particularly if, as in the case of Rivera, his natural inclinations are in the direction of public works. At the same time this philosophy is not likely to be more efficacious than any other in turning bad artists into good ones. Most people agree that the artist is free to choose his subject-matter—Rivera has chosen the proletarian revolution in Mexico—and we are free to judge of his results.

To European eyes, trained in the scrupulous sensibility, the perfectionism of the last 70 or 80 years of French painting, Rivera's work is immediately repellent. It is as a whole, coarse, crude and mannered and there seldom appears even a passage of painting which has that ring of inevitability which we have come to demand before we give our careful approbation. Some qualifications of this criticism give it a more generous look. Firstly, Rivera works in tempera, on walls. He has to work quickly and he he has to finish as he goes. This makes it almost essential (the exception is of course in the case of genius) that there should be some sort of simplification, a limitation of realisation, to ensure a degree of consistency between the parts. Hence come the inflated forms, the doll-like archaisms and the arbitrary drawing, lifted recklessly from Renoir, the Douanier Rouseau and a host of less reputable sources. Secondly, Rivera's work varies enormously in quality and scope. Some of the painting reproduced in this book (and incidentally some of Rivera's best work has been omitted in order not to repeat the illustrations to *Portrait of Mexico*), notably a self-portrait and a fresco of himself and some assistants at work, seems to be good painting by any standard. Thirdly, there is the size and generosity of his character coming through in his painting. He sees things broadly, plans bravely, and is not afriad to look a little foolish. He is no niggler and no coward. There are times when he shows an almost Italian sense of what to do with a wall, so that it remains a wall even when covered with painting. There are times when he seems three parts charlatan and one part propagandist.

Mr. Wolfe tells us that, when young, Rivera used to gaze and gaze into a shop window where was displayed, together with crude woodcuts of topical political subjects, a reproduction of Michelangelo's *Last Judgement*. Rivera's work lies somewhere between the European genius and the lively Mexican comic strip. He has suffered from stupid abuse and wild adulation. Mr. Wolfe quotes without comment "Mr. Rivera's work seems to embody an appreciation of the wall surface as the theme of his decoration which has hardly been surpassed since the days of Giotto." Mr. Wolfe claims that, for himself, Mexico has become Rivera, he sees the undergrowth, the turn of the road and the market place afresh, his sense awakened by the artist's brush. Of this one cannot judge. When Mr. Wolfe says that Rivera's paintings have movement one may, on the evidence, disagree. But at all events, as Guillaume Apollinaire wrote, in the days when Rivera was playing cubism, "Rivera n'est pas du tout négligible."

GRAHAM BELL

Ornamental Flowering Trees and Shrubs. Royal Horticultural Society. 10s. 6d.

The R.H.S. are to be congratulated on republishing this volume despite the times. It is the report of the conference, held in the Spring of 1938, and includes all the papers read and a précis of the discussions which followed. Lord Aberconway explains that the Council inaugurated the conference because rising costs and increased taxation have forced gardeners to economise and flowering trees and shrubs present a solution of the difficulty, for they give a maximum of effect with a minimum of effort and expense. Also the number of new plants introduced within our own lifetime is enormous,

Is Federalism The Solution?

D. N. PRITT,
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with his recent books has come right to the fore as a political writer. He has now written a brilliant analysis of the proposals and implications of Federal Union, and all that he writes is worthy of the closest consideration of those desirous of establishing permanent peace. There are chapters on the League, and its failure, the significance of Anglo-French collaboration, and a brilliant section on the danger of Federal Union being used as a "smoke screen."

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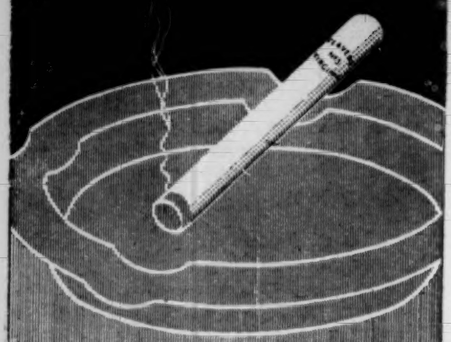
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and as many of them are superior to older varieties, it was hoped that the conference and this volume would encourage gardeners to plant the best available subjects. Apart from Rhododendrons, which were excluded, practically every group of flowering trees and shrubs is dealt with by acknowledged experts, and the result is that a most valuable book has been added to gardening literature. There are, too, papers on arrangement, pruning and propagating. Over seventy plates illustrate subjects and methods. Unfortunately, a few are unsatisfactory, and we hope that, with peace, the Council will re-illustrate future editions.

The Stock Exchange Official Year Book, 1940. Edited by the Secretary of the Share and Loan Department of the Stock Exchange. *Skinner.* 70s.

This encyclopaedic financial reference book makes its appearance once again in its usual format and on familiar lines. The war, of course, is responsible for the addition of several new features, such as a synopsis of the Trading with the Enemy Act, and legislation affecting the conduct of business by traders. Particulars of Excess Profits Tax, Estate Duty, etc., imposed by the Finance No. 2 Act of 1939 are included and there is a list of emergency addresses of Companies, Local Authorities, Registrars, etc. As before, special chapters deal with Municipal and County finance, and Dominion, Colonial and Foreign figures are also given. In all, the volume consists of nearly 4,000 pages, and once again tribute must be paid to the combined skill of paper-maker, printer and binder, who together produced a book which contains so much information and is yet both legible and serviceable.

About Motoring

TO-MORROW—AND THE PRIVATE MOTORIST ?

At the moment the Government allot the private motorist enough petrol to cover about 200 miles per month, and freely authorise him to use this amount of petrol for any purpose at his discretion ; it is in no sense earmarked for purely utilitarian journeys. Simultaneously the sale of new motor cars and motor cycles is unrestricted ; actually, very few new cars are being delivered to private owners, partly because of the uncertainties surrounding fuel rations, and partly because many excellent second-hand cars are obtainable at low prices. But a great many people are buying low-powered motor cycles in order to maintain private transport facilities at a minimum cost. In the background we hear just the same talk as was audible in the mid stages of the last war about the conversion of petrol cars to gas fuel and other improvised and uncontrolled propellants.

In this war, as Critic remarked, anything is possible, and nothing is probable. If any prophecies are plausible, there is general agreement that nothing short of an internal collapse in Germany (of which there is neither sign nor early prospect) can abbreviate the war ; and that since so much hangs on the result of the war, it will not in any case end without a colossal convulsion, during which the more desperate participant would fling in everything at his command. Both these forecasts indicate that financial problems must eventually become acute. As soon as financial stringency begins to peak, private motoring will practically cease. Those of us who are at present arranging our lives on the basis of running a private car, if only for 200 miles per month, should realise that this amenity will disappear—if not this year, then almost assuredly next year.

Since the last war, motor transport, whether personal or public, has become an immensely more potent factor in the lives of most of us. The bourgeois has deliberately chosen to reside further from his work, his railway station, his shopping centre, his cinemas, and his clubs than he did in 1914. The artisan has come to regard distance from the factory as comparatively unimportant ; he has always been ready to cycle to work in summer, but hated it in winter ; nowadays he is content to use the motor bus in bad weather, and the cheap pedal cycle on good days. He will not be very seriously affected by slashing reductions in motoring as his labour is essential to the conduct of war, and his buses will continue to run. But a great many *petits bourgeois* will find themselves marooned at a most awkward distance from their domestic and professional destinations, whilst their tradesmen, for want of fuel and labour, will not deliver goods as often or as readily as they did. It follows that the middle classes will presently wish to migrate back to the areas where they resided in the pre-motor era, i.e., close to the centres of towns or cities, so as to eliminate long tramps. Since no such large-scale migration will be convenient or indeed possible, the pedal cycle offers the simplest solution, alike for father (between home and station, office, club, etc.) ; for mother (on all her lawful occasions from shopping to war work and recreation) and for the children (to school and recreation).

At the moment there is a practically unlimited supply of excellent pedal cycles, both new and second-hand, at very reasonable prices. But it is by no means adequate to cover the enormous number of people who are still relying on alternative forms of transport, and who are likely to need cycles before the war is over. Moreover, the manufacture of cycles is tolerably certain to dwindle quite rapidly when the supply of labour and materials is deflected to more military purposes.

Paterfamilias, who resides a mile or two from all the family places of resort, should therefore commence to plan for a period when his car will be compulsorily laid up, and buses and trains will run less frequently. Two of his possible needs should occupy the forefront of his thoughts. The output of undersize cycles for children is not large, and such sizes might well be secured at once. The family may possibly require ultimately four or five machines. The garage will be occupied by the useless car. It would be inconvenient to store four or five cycles in the hall, and both unwholesome and wasteful to lean them against fences in the garden, not to mention the certainty of thefts. At the moment the cheap materials required to build a small lean-to cycle shed, complete with rack, are available, and so is the labour ; but a time will come when neither material nor carpenter can be had.

If the master of the house or indeed any of its members are occupied on tasks essential to national defence, a small gamble may be justified. The miniature autocycles cover from 120 to 150 miles on a gallon of fuel, and are still allotted a monthly ration of two gallons, equivalent to ten miles per day. They cost from £20 to £30, according to the luxury of their specification. They are entirely reliable, quite comfortable, easy to manage, and very safe. Since many elderly people are not physically equal to pedalling a cycle in all weathers, these handy little machines are a most attractive alternative ; and it is quite possible that even when more stringent conditions develop the Government will not grudge two gallons per month to people whose duties are essential. If such a purchase is made, the user should immediately buy a really first-class waterproof coat and leggings ; for even if such goods remain available to the public, their cost will certainly increase before long. Delivery is not very prompt, as a great many people have already grasped the merits of these machines with avidity ; but a good sample can be ordered for delivery in two or three weeks, although by the end of the year no further supplies will necessarily be available.

R. E. DAVIDSON

Week-end Competitions

No. 536

Set by Roderick Random

"Believe me . . . my dear Sir . . . if I remember rightly . . . "

The usual prizes are offered for a pen-portrait in not more than 250 words of a person whose conversation is punctuated by these phrases.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Friday, May 24th.

2. Competitors may use a pseudonym. Typescript is not insisted on, but writing must be on one side of the paper only.

3. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS.

cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

4. No competitor is eligible for more than one prize in any one week.

The result of last week's competition will be announced in our next issue.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 534

Set by Raymond Mortimer

A first prize of two guineas and a second prize of half a guinea are offered for the best set of three clerihews on the names of novelists.

Report by Raymond Mortimer

Novelists have not such convenient names as painters and composers, but out of a whole Chelsea Show of entries I have picked some fine blooms. The second prize goes to Gragge ; the first to Peter Chamberlain, who sent a verse which is hardly a clerihew, and not on a novelist's name :

Why " Little
By Little " ?
Eric
Was always heading straight for Mrs. Merrick.

In case anybody fancies that clerihews are statements of fact, I must remind readers that Mr. Nichols gave away the profits of his book about religion.

FIRST PRIZE

A PAMPHLET AGAINST ANTHOLOGIES

MR. GRAVES' apologies
But he seldom contributes to Anthologies,
Holding them to be misguiding
And inimical to MISS RIDING.

OXFORD GROUP INC.

BEVERLEY NICHOLS
Was quite one of the pickles
Till he found praying
Even more paying.

WAVERLEY

SIR WALTER SCOTT
Wrote a lot ;
As a rule,
You read one at school.

PETER CHAMBERLAIN

SECOND PRIZE

Stella said " No,"
And Swift " Right ho,
But I'll go demented."
And he went it.

Dumas in actuality
Had a split personality,
And they were
A père.

Somerset Maugham
Plays the lute and the shawm,
But thinks the psaltery
Paltry.

GRAGGE

Here is a selection of the others :

Mr. Somerset Maugham
Now treats highbrows with scorn :
Strange ! Before he'd begun to,
I thought he was one too.

(Charles Furbank)

Cronin
Is not alone in
Thinking Miss Austen
Exhaustin'.

(Sam Smiles)

Evelyn Waugh
While dining muttered : " Faugh !
How reminiscent of vile bodies
This cod is ! "

(L. V. Upward)

Flaubert
When not quite saubert
Preferred Dumb Crambo
To writing Salammbô.

(John Blackie)

When D. H. Lawrence
Went to Florence
Freda stayed on the train—
She knew they'd soon want to be off again.

(T. Palmer)

That Quiller-Couch
Was straight, I dare vouch,
But he made quite a do
Of writing as Q.

(William Summers)

Godfrey Winn
Has a boyish grin,
So would you
If you had his screw.

(Jerrard Tickell)

D. H. Lawrence
Held pornophils in abhorrence,
So he made them pay through the nose
For Lady Chatterley's prose.

(G. J. Houston)

Elinor Glyn
Wrote of Sin
And made quite a hit
With It.

(G. H. Phelps)

Leo Tolstoy,
Bidding farewell to joy,
Expressed strong views about Heaven,
And Beethoven Op. 47.

(J. G. Hunt)

Sir Hugh Walpole
Was never on the dole.
Would his work be finer
If he were a miner ?

(N. M. Turner)

Sir Thomas Malory
Refused to play to the gallery,
" It won't end happily ! "
He said snappily.

(D. E. C. Cave)

It's a pity that Henry James
Was not better at games :
They are such an excellent corrective
For the Introspective.

Alexandre Dumas, père,
Had black woolly hair.
Dumas, fils,
Kept his down with grease.

(J. D. K. Lloyd)

Dorothy L. Sayers,
Though plotting even at prayers,
Would never leave the Church
In the lurch.

(Ronald Lambton)

D. H. Lawrence
Used to write torrents
In praise of loins
And groins.

(J. C. B. Date)

Until recently Marcel Proust
Was the one who ruled the roost
But we now discern something soberer
In M. Dekobra.

The works of Mr. Joyce
Are generally considered rather choice
Except by obscure portions of the nation
Such as the Young Men's Christian Association.

(J. M. Cameron)

Mrs. Henry Wood
Showed the advantages of being good :
On the other hand
She was not connected with the band.

(R. S. Jaffray)

It had to be concealed
From E. M. Delafield
That what made her sell
Was being confused with E. M. Dell.

(Sheila Pim)

E. C. Bentley
Incidentally
Can lay claim
To a versi-form name.

(Molly Cathcart)

" Yes," said Gertrude Stein,
" I can easily fill up a line.
I don't find it any bother
To put one word one word one one one
one word after another."

(Emmy Bridgwater)

Bannin'
Ethel Mannin
Would be an attempt to ration
Passion.

(N. Ceen)

The late Edgar Wallace
has been called " the bishops' solace,"
perhaps because his books
are about crooks.

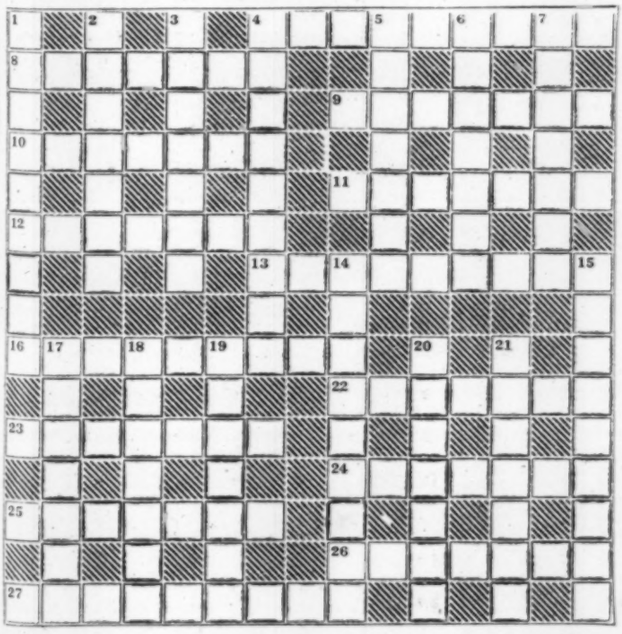
(Allan M. Laing)

Proust
Used
To write novels that ought ter
Be shorter.

(Gerald Summers)

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 532

Set by L.-S.



ACROSS

4. Form of torture for China ?
8. Solid fuel for mechanised cows ?
9. Coiner, not herbalist.
10. One result of having rounds in parts.
11. City ways.
12. Burning cold.
13. They give hill dwellers a mortal licking.
16. Rider's sole contact with earth.
22. What portholes should do.
23. Suitably describes the end of a cricket match.
24. Central eruption.
25. How to go eel-baiting.
26. Includes of course the birthday suit.
27. A small seat out in the country, so to speak.

DOWN

1. Change that's not noted.
2. Kidnapping with mug and pail.
3. Their function is deplorable.
4. Money for Naval N.C.O.s ?
5. Hilt set with an emblem.
6. Come back—for more drinks presumably.
7. The school house.
14. No doubt ensured the production footwear in prison.
15. Those who shout this invite arrest.
17. Adam became his servant.
18. Soaked — at some one else's expense ?
19. A fishy settler.
20. We owe them to Odin's wife.
21. Can I hit it ?

Last week's winner : Ed. Graham Guest, 5 Newbattle Terrace, Edinburgh

Books to the value of Five Shillings may be chosen by the sender of the first correct solution opened. Post solutions to arrive not later than first delivery Wednesday following the date of issue, addressed to "CROSSWORDS," 10 Great Turnstile, London, W.C.1.

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

■	P	O	L	L	Y	F	L	I	N	D	E	R	S	■
C	■	R	■	I	■	I	■	V	■	A	■	O	■	F
H	O	S	T	L	E	R	■	I	N	T	E	G	E	R
R	■	E	■	A	■	S	■	E	■	E	■	I	■	I
I	N	D	I	C	A	T	E	D	■	S	E	L	A	G
S	■	E	■	■	■	P	■	■	■	T	■	B	■	H
T	O	W	I	T	■	O	D	D	M	A	N	O	U	T
M	■	■	■	R	■	S	■	E	■	M	■	■	■	F
A	S	S	A	U	L	T	E	D	■	P	O	I	L	U
S	■	W	■	N	■	■	■	I	■	■	■	N	■	L
C	R	A	N	K	■	R	E	C	E	P	T	I	O	N
A	■	H	■	C	■	E	■	A	■	A	■	T	■	E
R	U	I	N	A	T	E	■	T	I	T	B	I	T	S
D	■	L	■	L	■	M	■	E	■	N	■	A	■	S
■	B	I	L	L	I	A	R	D	B	A	L	L	S	■

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By CYNICUS

WALL STREET PANIC—BRITISH EQUITIES ON THE DECLINE—CABLE AND WIRELESS

GERMAN saboteurs are not the only unpleasant things descending by parachute. Look at stocks and shares, especially common shares in Wall Street. Happily, panicky selling is confined to Wall Street, but this is not very significant seeing that it is in the nature of Wall Street to panic. It got into a fright some time ago because it thought the war was "phoney," would end quickly and would bring no profit to American profiteers. Now it is getting scared because total war has blazed up, but the underlying panic is the same—loss of war profits. I quote the routine cable report on Tuesday's fall: "On the belief that the blitzkrieg might bring a quick peace, stocks were dumped on the market." The Dow Jones index of industrial stocks, at the moment of writing, has fallen 21 points or 14 per cent. in two days. I trust that when the United States at last enter the war to preserve our common civilisation Wall Street will soar as indecently as it has fallen. Now comes Major Angas' latest digest—following up his prophecy of another coming boom—with the quaint idea that Mr. Roosevelt might resign immediately, handing over office to Mr. Garner, and tour the belligerent countries on a patched-up peace mission. This would be the signal, argues Major Angas, for a real boom. When Mr. Garner assumes office he would be regarded as rather like Mr. Coolidge—he would do no evil, speak no evil, and above all smell no evil from the point of view of big business. This was written by Major Angas before the blitzkreig, but it is instructive to see how Wall Street would welcome Mr. Garner. One blessing of the Wall Street slump should be to postpone or retard Treasury requisitioning of our American securities.

* * *

While Wall Street is waiting to have the profit put into the war, Throgmorton Street has been making up its mind that the profit has been taken not only out of the war but out of business altogether. I cannot follow this thinking. The ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer has introduced a State of Limitations for dividends and has set 4 per cent. as the maximum rate which capital, dividendless before the war, can pay during the war. This, of course, is an absurd rate to fix regardless of the risks to which capital is exposed, but appeals will be allowed to a Board of Referees in cases of developing companies. The introduction of Labour into the Cabinet (but not into the Treasury, be it observed) does not mean that this treatment of capital is to be drastically revised. Mr. Ernest Bevin's recent speech suggested that he regarded an inflation of wages as inevitable and proper during a war, but no doubt he would also express the view that the Excess Profits Tax should be raised from 60 per cent. to 100 per cent. Perhaps Labour will now see to it that the Excess Profits Tax is revised on rational lines, namely, that a reasonable percentage standard should be allowed and that "excessive" profits should be confiscated altogether. This would not constitute a fundamental attack on capital as such. My advice to investors is not to be frightened out of sound equities. If the gilt-edged market is to be stabilised even at its minimum prices, which would give War Loan a yield of £3 13*s.* 9*d.* per cent., equity shares which are not badly affected by E.P.T. or by dividend limitation should be stabilised on a yield basis of 1½ per cent. to 3½ per cent. above £3 13*s.* 9*d.* per cent. according to the risk premium required. I see no reason to change this fundamental principle of capital investment.

* * *

I am not suggesting that this is yet the time to buy the best equities. As the blitzkreig develops and the bombs begin to fall on this country, stocks and shares will parachute to still lower prices. Apart from the home railway market, where the forced selling of recent speculators has caused losses up to 20 per cent., the decline has not yet been very severe. Imperial Tobacco dropping from 5⅝ to 5½, British American Tobacco from 5⅛ to 4¾, Shell Transport from 3½ to 3 1/16, are not extreme falls for active markets where the rush for liquidity must be centred. Iron and Steel shares, gold and tin shares and such safe industrials as Imperial Chemical have weakened only slightly. If the investor wishes to pick up shares at attractive prices he should place "limits" to buy the sheltered equities which I have recently been recommending at prices, say, 10 per cent. below those ruling to-day. And he should acquire only half his quota if these limits are touched, so that he can buy more if the war news becomes still more unpleasant. War Loan has only fallen from 101¾ to 97¾: when its minimum price of 95 is reached, the buyer of sound equities should begin to look round for his bargains.

* * *

The static period of warfare which lasted for eight months was a busy time for Cables and this enabled Cable and Wireless (Holding) to offset a substantial decline in income from its Marconi shares. Thus the Holding Company covered its 5½ per cent. preference stock and the dividend of 4 per cent. on its ordinary stock with a small surplus. The preference stock at 96½ has hardly moved and the ordinary stock at 51 is only slightly lower. Both stocks now appear more vulnerable to a total war which is engulfing the great commercial nations of Europe.

Company Meeting

BIKAM RUBBER ESTATE

REPLANTING RESUMED

THE Thirtieth Ordinary General Meeting of the Bikam Rubber Estate, Limited, was held on Friday, May 10th, at 19 Fenchurch Street, London, E.C.

Mr. H. Eric Miller (the chairman), after referring to the death of Mr. W. J. Payne and the election of Mr. Haig to fill the vacancy on the Board, said that the result of the company's operations in 1939 was a credit balance of £57,222, an increase of £25,564 over that for 1938. The company's estates continued to be well reported on by their visiting agents, and the special cultivation measures were being continued. Last year they utilised rights to new planting granted the company under the International Regulation Agreement to the extent of 322 acres. That left the company with rights for 310 acres in hand. All of those would be used this year.

A year ago he said that in view of the new planting being undertaken further replanting had been deferred, but the Board had been reconsidering that question, and replanting would be resumed. If the Bikam Company was to maintain its earning and dividend paying capacity, it behoved it to start replanting its older areas before the time came when even up-to-date cultivation was incapable of preventing declining yields. It should not be forgotten that replanting was a less expensive process than new planting nor should it be overlooked that every acre of soundly replanted rubber should ultimately be worth more than two acres of old rubber from a dividend earning point of view.

As he had said the credit balance for 1939 was £57,222 or 10½ per cent. on the company's issued capital. It was the second most successful year the company had experienced since it acquired the Sungkai Chumor and North Labis Companies. In order to cover the Company's liability for income tax it was necessary to set aside the sum of £7,000 in addition to the amount which would be deducted from the dividend warrants.

They were able to pay the shareholders a reasonable dividend of 7½ per cent., and at the same time increase the reserve for cultivation and replacement to £35,000 by an appropriation of £9,081 10*s.* 6*d.*

Out of the 1940 crop they had sold to date, including rubber still to be delivered against forward contracts, 1,908,480 lb. at an average price of 10¾*d.* per lb., London terms. It looked as if the earnings for the current year would exceed those for 1939.

The report was unanimously adopted.

Company Meeting

PATALING RUBBER ESTATES

DIVIDEND OF 12 PER CENT

THE Twentieth Ordinary General Meeting of the Pataling Rubber Estates, Limited, was held on May 10th, at 19 Fenchurch Street, London, E.C.

Mr. H. Eric Miller (the chairman) said in the course of his speech: The periodical reports made on our properties by the visiting agents all indicate that the estates are in their usual sound agricultural condition and that the special cultivation programme to which I have made reference on more than one occasion at our annual meetings is thoroughly justifying itself. That special cultivation is being continued, but your Board does not feel that by itself it is sufficient to keep Pataling in the front rank of rubber-producing companies.

Approximately 18 per cent. of our rubber is now 30 or more years old. It has therefore been decided gradually to replant the whole of Bukit Blimbing Estate over a period of years and the replanting of some of the older areas on our other estates is under consideration. 485 acres of new planting was done in 1939, thus using up all the planting rights granted to the company under the International Regulation Agreement.

The credit balance for 1939, after providing £3,000 for N.D.C. and E.P.T. was £55,369 or 18 per cent. on the issued capital of the company. In order to cover the estimated liability for income tax on the profits earned to December 31st last, it is necessary to reserve £9,000 to augment the amount which will be deducted from dividends. As I have just explained a replanting programme is in view and it is prudent to create or augment reserves for such programmes when profits permit of this being done without unduly limiting dividend distributions. It is therefore proposed to raise the Reserve for Cultivation and Replacement to £30,000 by making an appropriation of £10,116 3*s.* 3*d.*, and to recommend the payment of a final dividend of 8 per cent., making 12 per cent. for the year.

As to the outlook for the current year, it seems certain that the present rate of release will have to be reduced, but even so we shall no doubt account for a larger crop. We have protected the position by entering into forward sales for delivery during 1940 of 1,592,640 lb. at an average price of over 10½*d.* per lb., London terms. Costs, I trust, will not be unduly increased. The company is in a sound position and we look forward to presenting a good account a year hence.

The report was unanimously adopted.

PURELY PERSONAL

MITZY. Mt u crnr Shaftby Av Fri 6. Pls brng usl qnty King Six Cigars. C.O.D. Am lost wthout them. MAXY.

HOLIDAY SUGGESTIONS

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OPPOSITE the British Museum, Great Russell St., W.C.1. Telephones and free electric heating in all bedrooms. Numerous Private Bathrooms. Bedroom, Bath and Breakfast from 9s. 6d. per night. Illustrated Booklet and Inclusive Terms on application.

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Company Meeting

ALLIANCE ASSURANCE COMPANY LIMITED

MR. LIONEL N. DE ROTHSCHILD'S ADDRESS

THE Annual General Court was held on May 15th, at the Head Office in London. Mr. Lionel N. de Rothschild (chairman) presided and said (in part):

In the Life Department there has been, as was only to be expected, a material decline in new business. The new Life business completed amounted to £2,794,227. The purchase money in respect of immediate Annuity business was £41,202 less than in the previous year. The mortality experience was once again particularly favourable. The premium income in the active Alliance Life account was £1,435,984 and the Alliance Life and Annuity Funds now amount to £22,787,036, being an addition of £278,292 for the year.

In the Fire Department the net premiums amounted to £2,196,409, being £14,843 less than those of the previous year. This is accounted for entirely by the cessation of business in Germany, Poland and Danzig, and the loss of certain Fire connections in Canada following on our decision to cease writing Accident business in that country. Our Home premium income has increased. The claims (including contributions to Fire Brigades) amounted to £740,048, being £29,100 less than those of 1938. After adjustment of reserves for unexpired risks and the inclusion of interest (less tax), and after increasing the additional reserve once again by £100,000, a balance of £454,199 has been carried to Profit and Loss account.

In the Accident Department there has been a considerable fall in the premium income from £1,491,872 to £1,371,640, or £120,000 down on last year. The two chief causes are the laying up of motor cars and the cessation of Accident business in Canada. The result of the Workmen's Compensation section has been satisfactory and the premium income has been maintained. The surplus in the Combined Accident Account amounts to £108,252, to which has to be added interest, making £168,082, transferred to Profit and Loss account.

The Marine premium income has increased by £176,861. The Underwriting Account for 1937 has now been closed, and £16,592 has been set aside to meet further claims. A total of £47,120 has been carried to Profit and Loss account.

The Trustee Department is progressing on an even keel and is becoming more and more popular and appreciated by clients and friends.

Regarding the Profit and Loss account: Taxation has increased by some £15,000 and the item "Expenses not charged to other Accounts" is some £49,000 more than last year. This is accounted for by the fact that we have brought into the accounts practically the whole of the expenditure for temporary premises, A.R.P. work and duplication of records. £50,000 has been allocated to Reserve and £50,000 to the Staff Pension Fund. I hope that you will agree with me that the results of the past year, having in view the unavoidable loss of business and the special expenditure that has had to be incurred, are very gratifying.

The report was unanimously adopted.

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